Inside:

Australian MUSCLE CAR

THE HERITAGE OF HOMEGROWN HIGH PERFORMANCE

Issue 151
$13.99

CLOCKING THE TON!

Celebrating 100 years of Ford Australia

Lap of Tassie: Hardtop anniversary

A9X: the ultimate Bathurst Torana

Doug Chivas: the versatile veteran

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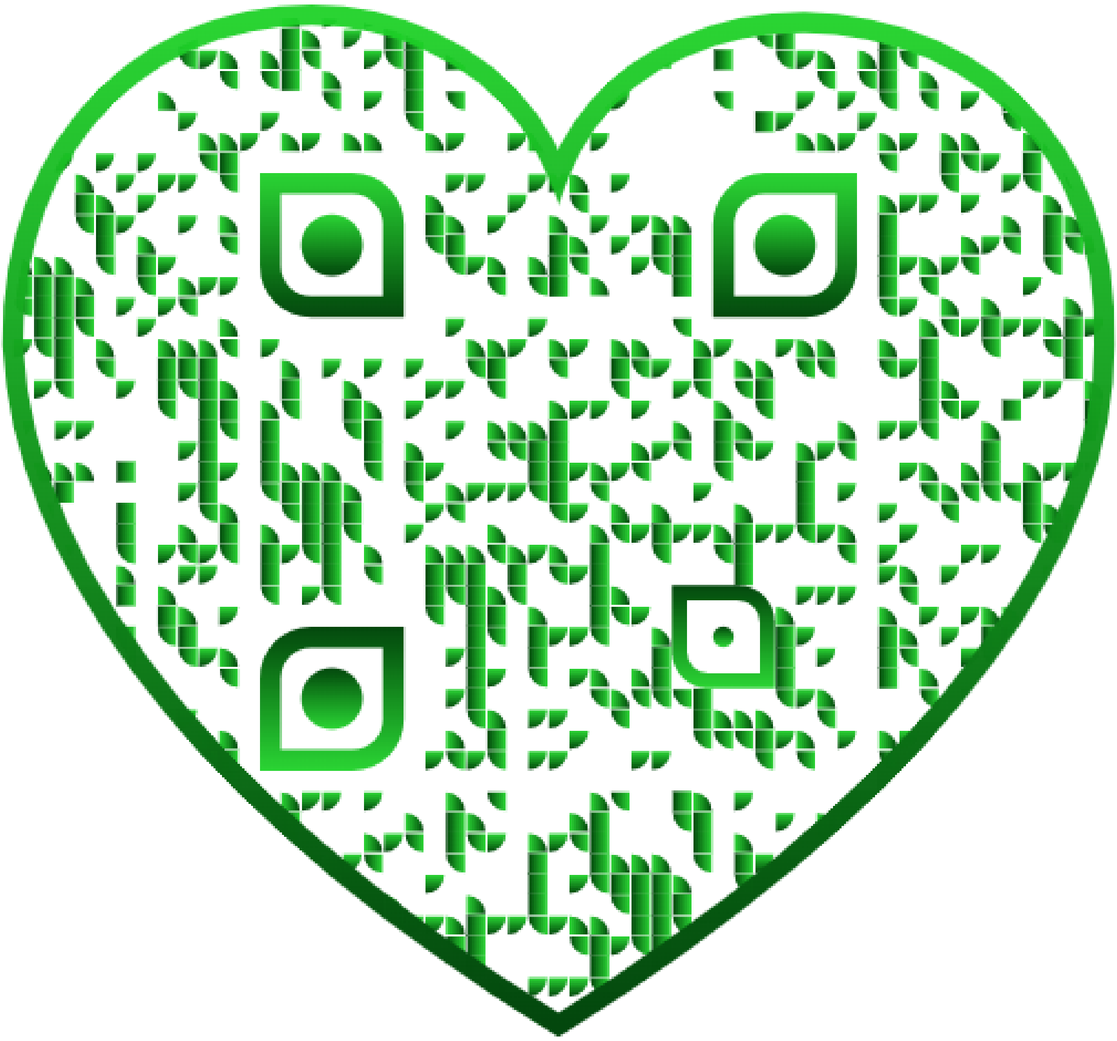

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Australian
MUSCLE CAR
THE HERITAGE OF HOMEGROWN HIGH PERFORMANCE

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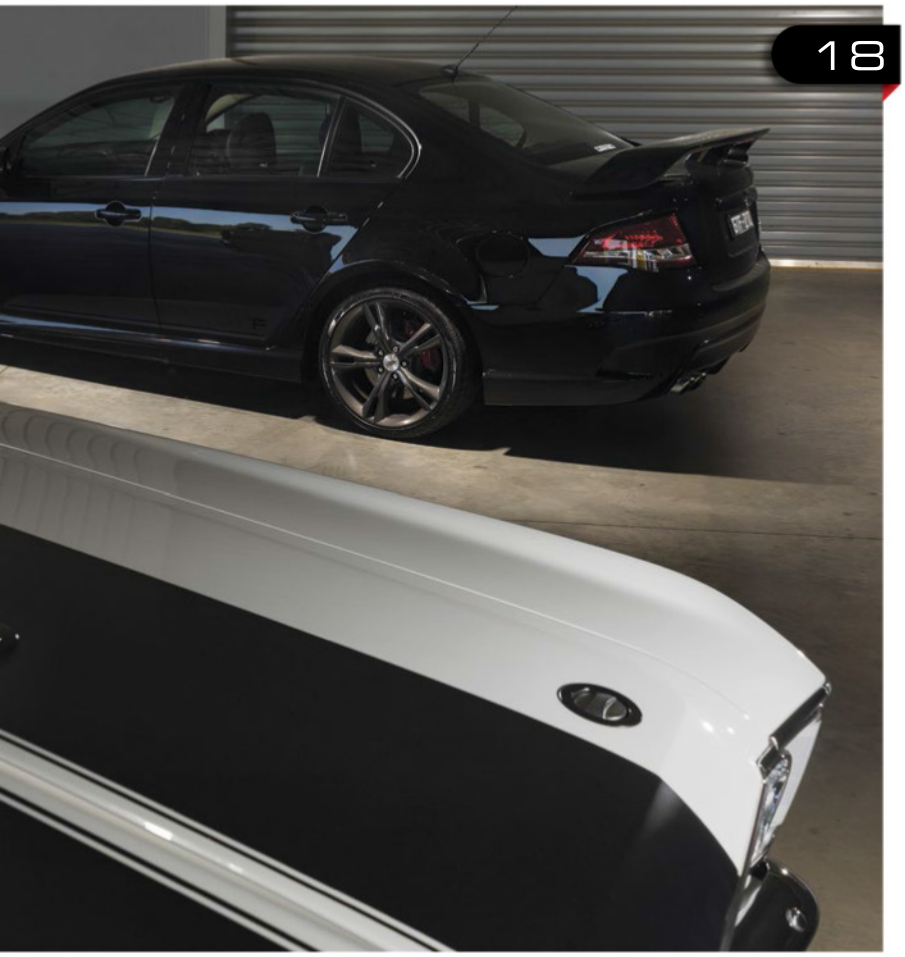

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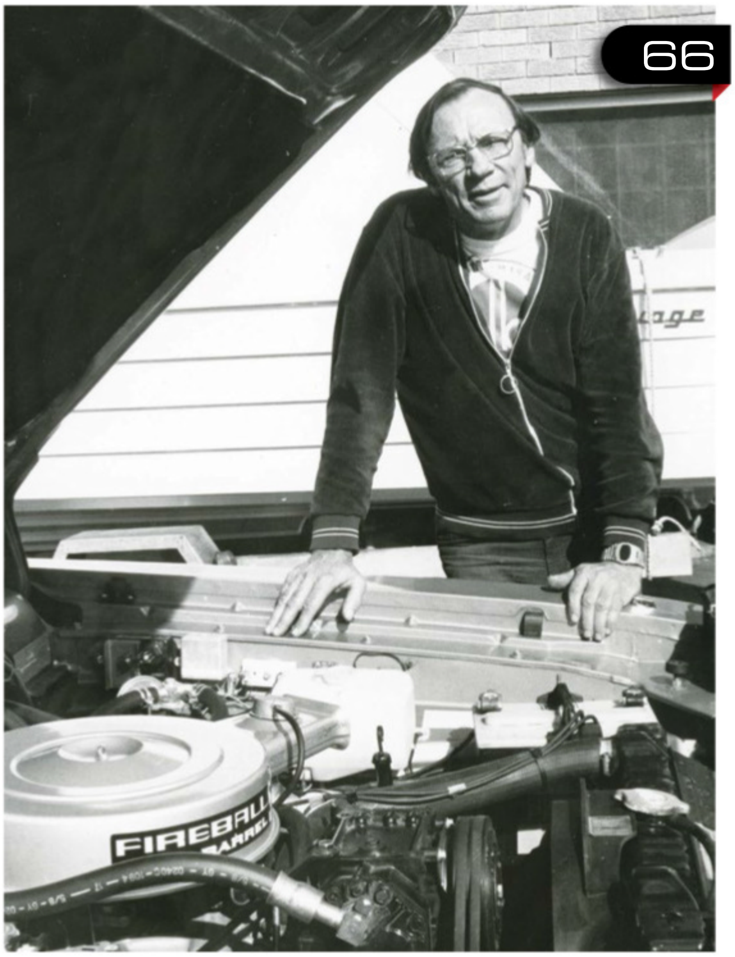

Bernie Hart

Editor's Induction

Steve Normoyle

Holden is as Aussie an icon as any Aussie icon could be. Right from the beginning, as the very first Holden car was unveiled by prime minister Ben Chifley in November, 1948, serenaded into the world by a 10-piece orchestra and to the loud applause of a crowd of more than 1000 in attendance, Holden was known definitively as 'Australia's Own'.

And why not? After all, it was the landmark first wholly Australian-manufactured car, and even though it had mostly been designed in the States, the Holden 48-215 was the result of a collaborative effort between GM's engineers and their counterparts down under at GM-H. More importantly, the prototypes had been largely developed in Australia, in Australian conditions – something that had never been done before.

But was this new Holden *really* worthy of all the accolades? Its on-sale price in early 1949 of 675 pounds (appreciating steadily into the new decade) was substantially higher than GM-H had originally forecast; some of the motoring press deemed it almost out of reach of the average family-man buyer. To put it in context, the larger, better equipped, more stylish and more powerful V8 Ford Custom sedan, which Ford by then was assembling in its Geelong plant, could be had for only around an additional 150 pounds.

But buyers mostly ignored the V8 Ford and instead flocked to the new Holden in numbers that surprised even GM-H (it certainly surprised the suits in GM's head office back in New York; they doubted an Australian-made car could be profitable, and only grudgingly granted it approval).

There's no doubt that while, yes, the Holden was a good car, the general public's perception of it as the *Australian* car was a huge factor in its success. Within a few years, and with just the one car in its model range, GM-H had achieved overwhelming market supremacy.

The meteoric rise of GM-H in the '50s made for a dramatic reshaping of the Australian car industry. And yet it could easily have been very different. As our 100 years of Ford Australia feature on page 18 explains, had the political cards fallen differently, 'Australia's Own' in 1948 might have been a V8 Ford, and not the Holden six.

The Holden car was the end result of the federal government's shout out to industry to manufacture cars in Australia. GM-H proved the favoured applicant, getting the nod from government ahead of the proposals from Ford and Nuffield Australia (later BMC). If BMC is a name from a bygone era, there'd be few people still alive today that even remember Nuffield – but let's not forget that in 1948 when the Holden was born, Australia's top selling car was Nuffield's stodgy 1.2-litre, four-cylinder Austin A40 (at roughly the same price as the Holden).

Today BMC/Leyland is long gone. The plant at Zetland in Sydney's south that Nuffield built in 1948 to assemble and later manufacture cars was shut down with Leyland's closure in 1974 (our feature on BMC/Leyland employee and Sports Sedan racer Noel Delforce on page 82 provides some great insights from behind the four walls at Leyland in the '60s and '70s).

Just as Leyland is gone, so too of course is GM-H, along with the entire Australian car manufacturing industry.

But Ford Australia remains.

As Ford celebrates the milestone of its 100th year of operations in Australia, it's a good time to reflect on the company's monumental contribution to motoring in this country.

When the Ford Motor Company laid down its Australian roots at Geelong 100 years ago, General Motors-Holden didn't even exist. Ford Australia was assembling Fords at Geelong some 23 years before the first Holden.

Holden might have been 'Australia's Own', but Ford was making its own 'Australian' car in the XK Falcon less than 12 years after Ben Chifley welcomed the 48-215 into the world. By 1965, the American-sourced original Falcon series had been developed and improved by Ford Australia to the point where it was now no less an Australian car than the Holden HD-HR series. From the XA on, the Falcon was a home-grown vehicle made specifically for *us* – often, and especially during the Commodore era, the Falcon was in actual fact more 'Aussie' than its GM-H opposite number.

Sadly, no one makes cars here anymore. While unfortunately for us muscle car fans, there is no 2025 Falcon XR8 (think back to how good the final FG-X supercharged Miami 5.0-litre V8-powered XR8 was, and just imagine what an MY2025 XR8 would have been like!), there is the Mustang – the only actual *car* that Ford Australia sells these days.

The good news about the Mustang is that from everything we've seen and heard from Ford – from the massive global Mustang competition programme to comments from Ford itself that it will keep making Mustangs and V8s for as long as there is demand – we'll get to enjoy the Ponycar for some time yet

Likewise, from everything we've seen and heard from Ford here, culminating in that lavish 100th 'birthday' celebration recently in Melbourne, attended by Bill Ford Jr, great grandson of old Henry himself, Ford Australia also isn't going anywhere any time soon.

Australian MUSCLE CAR
THE HERITAGE OF HOMEGROWN HIGH PERFORMANCE

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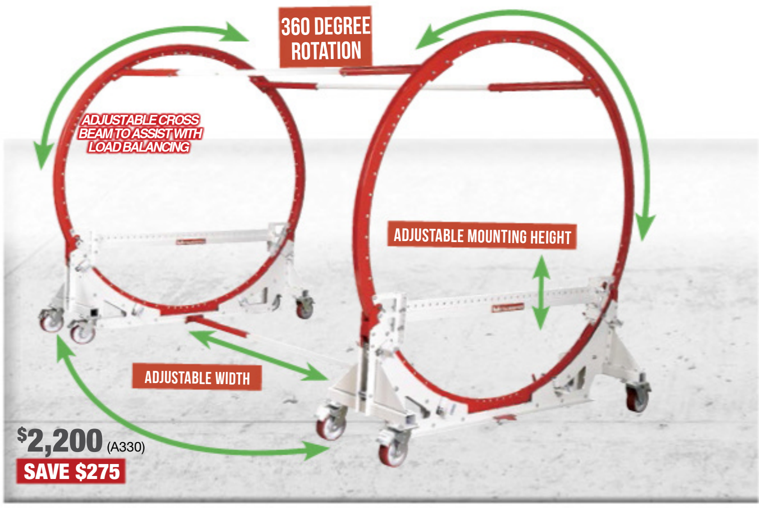
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SAVE $429

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- The kit includes 69-piece Fixturing Kit

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SAVE $176

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02_AMC270325

The 1966 Falcon
made by GM-H

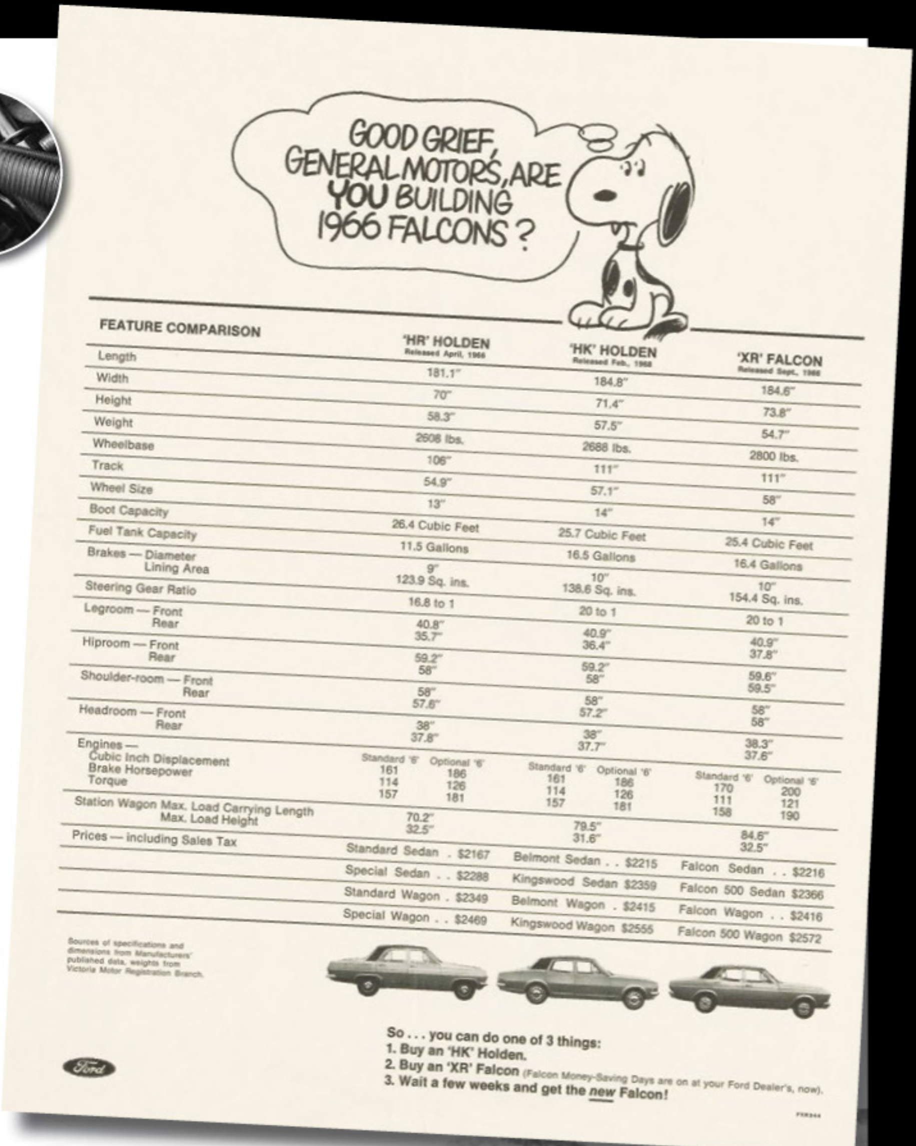
This is a late 1960s full-page print advertisement from Ford Australia (*AMC* stumbled on it while digging through the archives for our Ford Australia 100th birthday feature). It's an ad for the new Falcon, but… which Falcon? Oddly, the actual model Falcon that Ford is trying to sell here (it's the XT) isn't mentioned by name anywhere in the ad. There's no photo of it, either, although there is a pic of the outgoing XR Falcon model – along with not one, but *two* photos of the opposition Holden's products.

So it's a Ford advert with pics of two Holdens, and not a single image of the new Falcon they're advertising.

It's not a mistake; the point Ford is seeking to make in the ad (via the question posed by Snoopy, from the then-popular 'Peanuts' cartoon series, *Charlie Brown*), is that the opposition Holden's new 1968 HK model range doesn't offer anything more than the previous HR model Holden, and the XR Falcon, did back in 1966.

To prove its case, Ford has compiled a table to compare the relative merits of HR and HK Holden, and the about-to-be-superseded XR Falcon (interestingly, in the stats table Ford was happy to let potential buyers know that the HK Holden had a larger fuel tank than the XR Falcon, as well as more rear-seat head room – and that the Holden 186cid six had five more horsepower than the 200cid XR six; although that shortcoming was about to be addressed with the XT's six-cylinder range being upped to the 186 Holden-eclipsing 221cid).

The ad concludes with this advice: you can buy a '1966' HK Holden or XR Falcon now, or wait a few weeks – and time-travel two years ahead in a brand new '68 model Falcon.



GOOD GRIEF,
GENERAL MOTORS, ARE
YOU BUILDING
1966 FALCONS?

FEATURE COMPARISON	'HR' HOLDEN Released April, 1966	'HK' HOLDEN Released Feb., 1968	'XR' FALCON Released Sept., 1966
Length	181.1"	184.8"	184.6"
Width	70"	71.4"	73.8"
Height	58.3"	57.5"	54.7"
Weight	2608 lbs.	2688 lbs.	2800 lbs.
Wheelbase	106"	111"	111"
Track	54.9"	57.1"	58"
Wheel Size	13"	14"	14"
Boot Capacity	26.4 Cubic Feet	25.7 Cubic Feet	25.4 Cubic Feet
Fuel Tank Capacity	11.5 Gallons	16.5 Gallons	16.4 Gallons
Brakes — Diameter Lining Area	9" 123.9 Sq. ins.	10" 138.6 Sq. ins.	10" 154.4 Sq. ins.
Steering Gear Ratio	16.8 to 1	20 to 1	20 to 1
Legroom — Front Rear	40.8" 35.7"	40.9" 36.4"	40.9" 37.8"
Hiproom — Front Rear	59.2" 58"	59.2" 58"	59.6" 59.5"
Shoulder-room — Front Rear	58" 57.6"	58" 57.2"	58" 58"
Headroom — Front Rear	38" 37.8"	38" 37.7"	38.3" 37.6"
Engines —	Standard '6' Optional '6'	Standard '6' Optional '6'	Standard '6' Optional '6'
Cubic Inch Displacement	161 186	161 186	170 200
Brake Horsepower	114 126	114 126	111 121
Torque	157 181	157 181	158 190
Station Wagon Max. Load Carrying Length Max. Load Height	70.2" 32.5"	79.5" 31.6"	84.6" 32.5"
Prices — including Sales Tax	Standard Sedan . $2167	Belmont Sedan . . $2215	Falcon Sedan . . $2216
	Special Sedan . . $2288	Kingswood Sedan $2359	Falcon 500 Sedan $2366
	Standard Wagon . $2349	Belmont Wagon . $2415	Falcon Wagon . . $2416
	Special Wagon . . $2469	Kingswood Wagon $2555	Falcon 500 Wagon $2572

Sources of specifications and dimensions from Manufacturers' published data, weights from Victoria Motor Registration Branch.

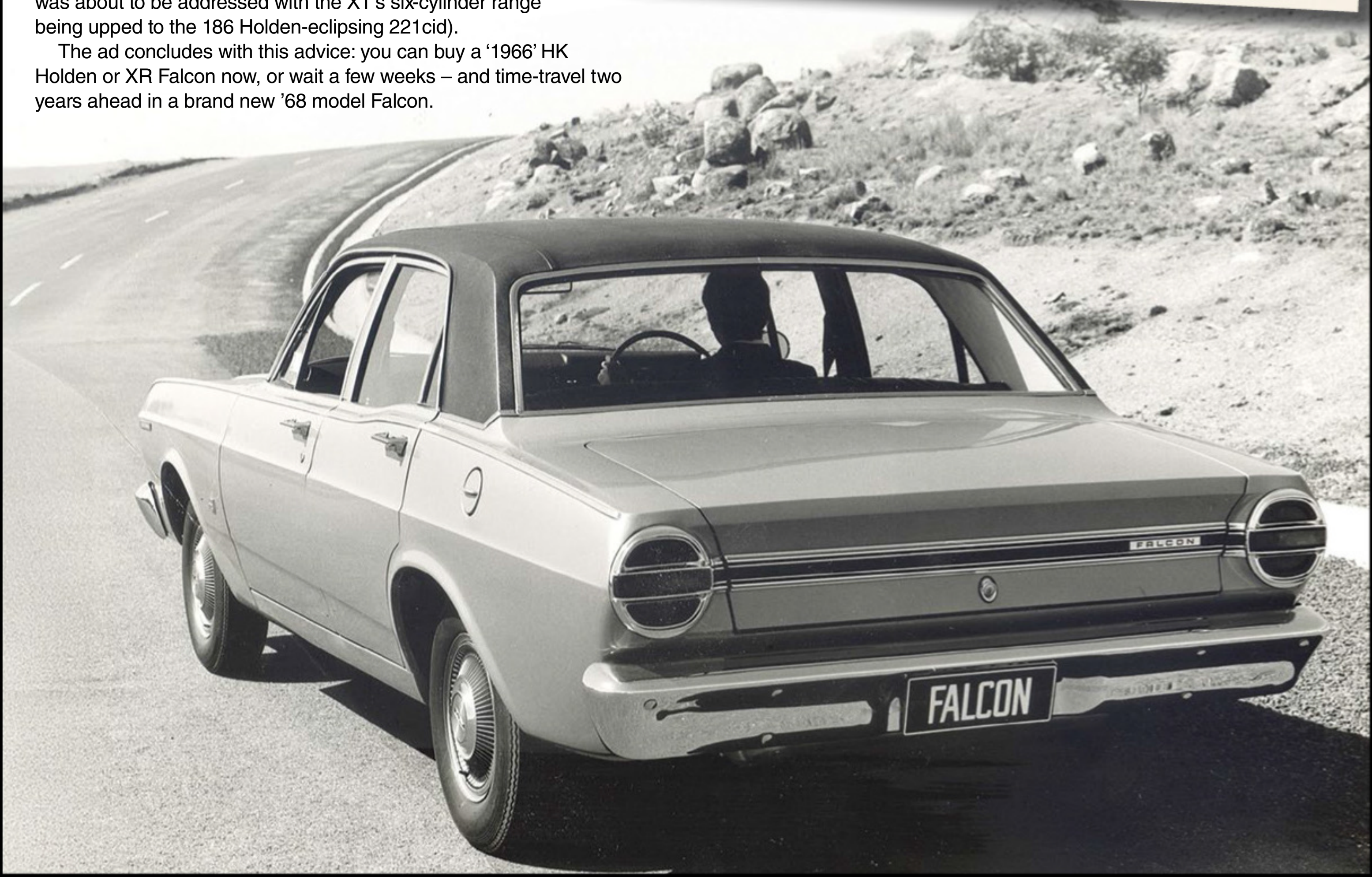
So . . . you can do one of 3 things:

1. Buy an 'HK' Holden.

2. Buy an 'XR' Falcon (Falcon Money-Saving Days are on at your Ford Dealer's, now).

3. Wait a few weeks and get the *new* Falcon!

FXR344



Project Pictorials

Moffat vs NSW Sports Sedan drivers

In our *Leyland brother* feature on page 82, Noel Delforce tells the story of an encounter he had with Allan Moffat in a Sports Sedan race in 1980. The *Racing Car News* report of that Oran Park meeting noted that it was 'just like old times with Moffat, Seldon and Delforce all stranded on the infield – I wonder if they swapped tales about the past?'

The past to which *RCN* was referring were the previous clashes Moffat had had in the Boss Mustang with both NSW Sports Sedan drivers, including the infamous altercation with David Seldon's Datsun at BP Bend in a Toby Lee Series Sports Sedan race in 1974. When interviewed by track commentators afterwards, Moffat launched an attack on Seldon and the other local drivers, describing them as 'unprofessional' and 'peanuts', and 'don't know the difference between clutch and steering wheel'. *RCN's* reporter wrote: 'It was a sensational outburst and one that was greeted, first in stunned silence, then by a mounting chorus of jeers and boos from the crowd at BP Corner who had their own ideas of who was at fault'.

And that wasn't even the first time Moffat had come to blows with the Oran Park locals. A year earlier in the Boss Mustang during a Toby Lee Series race, Moffat clashed with the lapped Barney Morris Torana XU-1 at Suttons Corner, with the Torana being despatched into the fence. Morris suffered a broken collarbone *(right)*; Moffat was charged with dangerous driving but was later acquitted. However, the crowd at Suttons was in no doubt as to who was to blame, and proceeded to hurl abuse – as well as empty drink cans, bottles and even fold-up chairs! – at Moffat's Mustang each time it came past.

But that wasn't even Moffat's *only* clash in that race – just five laps earlier the Mustang driver had had a coming-together with Delforce's Marina V8.

Autopics.com.au

"He t-boned me at Energol," Delforce explained to *AMC*. "I'd had a problem and had to go into the pits, so I was a lap down, so he's basically lapping me, and he's got Leo Geoghegan in the Porsche right up his clacker. I've moved over to the right so he can pass me, but he must have misjudged it because he just t-boned me.

"Afterwards, when Moffat was being interviewed about what happened, he said: 'they shouldn't let those $200 shitboxes on the track'. By the next race meeting we'd fixed it but we hadn't had time to spray it, so the front's still all in primer. Moffat's there again that meeting, and he comes up to me and says, 'Noel, why haven't you painted it?' And I said, 'why would I bother – it's only a $200 shitbox!' We had a good laugh about that. We had a few chats in the pits at different times, and I always found Moffat to be a really nice, pleasant guy.

"But Leo Geoghegan swears Moffat had tunnel vision – Leo came up to me after Moffat hit me and said, 'I saw the whole thing, and I'm sure he's got tunnel vision because he's looking straight ahead and it's like he couldn't even see you there. I could see it was going to happen.'

"But honestly, you know: the good old days…"

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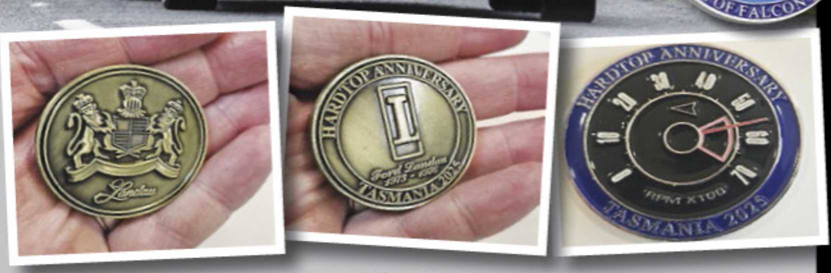
XBARRA
HTP-408
HARDTOP ANNIVERSARY TASMANIA 2025
100 YEARS OF FORD AUSTRALIA
100
50
50 YEARS OF FALCON HARDTOP

Take the Landau challenge

Here's a neat bit of merchandising from the organisers of the recent Hardtop Anniversary event in Tasmania *(see our feature on page 44)*: commemorative 'challenge coins' in celebration of the 100th year of Ford Australia.

The coin was designed to pay homage to Ford's own logo design (*below*) from its 50th year celebrations in 1975 (which was right in the middle of the Hardtop's model life) while also incorporating the 100th anniversary of Ford Australia.



There was a separate, special coin for Landau owners, in honour of the luxury coupe's flagship status in the Hardtop lineage. Event organisers issued a tongue-in-cheek note accompanying the coins to explain the exclusivity of the Landau coin:

Being a Landau owner, you obviously expect a bit more… Hence the addition of these Landau specific challenge coins. Much like your Landau, these coins are a very limited run of finely and exquisitely finished metal. They represent your elite status amongst men, women and hardtop owners alike. Keep this unique and collectable coin in your smoking jacket, with your pocket watch, white gloves or cheque book pocket.

FORD MOTOR COMPANY OF AUSTRALIA
50
1925 – 1975

The concept of challenge coins goes back to the first world war, when an American squadron lieutenant had bronze medallions carrying the squadron emblem made for each of his men. When one squadron member lost behind enemy lines escaped to French territory, the squadron coin was the proof to the French that he was not a foreign saboteur. It later became tradition that squadron members carried their medallion or coin at all times.

To ensure this practice was maintained, a 'challenge' system was developed: a challenger would ask to see the medallion, if the challenged could not produce a medallion, they were required to buy a drink of choice for the member who challenged them.

Torana Muscle on the Murray

Entries are now open for the Torana Muscle On The Murray 25, to be held at Quality Resort Siesta at Lavington in Albury's north on September 19-22. This social Torana gathering continues to gain momentum and with entrants rebooking each year it has gone on to be the biggest gathering of Toranas in the Riverina. To be part of it in 2025, contact Steve 0429 644 184 or Sharon 0428 262 941 to reserve your room and get the Torana group booking discount. Alternatively, call the Siesta Resort direct on 02 6025 4555. See you and your Torana at Torana Muscle on the Murray.

All Ford Day Qld

The All Ford Day Queensland is on this year at Willowbank Raceway, near Ipswich on July 20 – that's the week before the NSW All Ford Day. The event will feature a Show and Shine, trade stands, swap meet, 'race ya mate', free kids rides and food stalls. To enter, check the Willowbank Raceway website for when booking goes live – there's a non-refundable online booking fee, but entering on the day will be more expensive. For more details check the All Ford Day Southeast Qld website.

All Ford Day NSW 2025

It's a big year for Ford fans and owners as the blue oval celebrates its 100th year of operations in Australia. That means this year's NSW All Ford Day Weekend, hosted by the Combined Ford Clubs of NSW, is going to be bigger than ever. It takes place on July 26-27 at Sydney Dragway, Eastern Creek – on the Saturday (26th) there'll be a swap meet from 7am and, new for this year, drag racing from 10am (the drag racing events are open only to Ford-powered and Ford-bodied cars). Sunday is the car show and public concours displays, from 9am. For further information visit the All Ford Day Sydney Facebook page.

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PAGE 23 GIRL

1970 Ampol Trial

Ray Berghouse

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MOTOR HERITAGE
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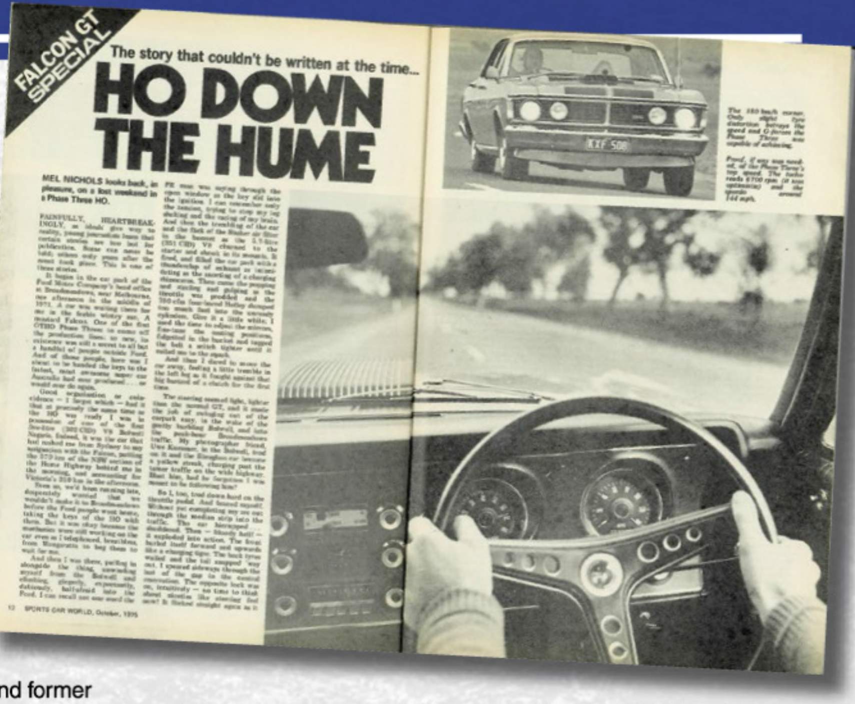
Paul Newby



FALCON GT SPECIAL

The story that couldn't be written at the time...

HO DOWN THE HUME

MEL NICHOLS looks back, in pleasure, on a lost weekend in a Phase Three HO.

Henry Ford is said to have uttered the words, 'History is bunk' more than a century ago. Of course, back then the Ford Motor Company had little in the way of history. Fast forward to today, and history is a primary marketing tool for all long-standing manufacturers (except Jaguar, based on the evidence of a recent bizarre rebranding exercise).

Australian MUSCLE CAR magazine does Australian muscle car and touring car racing history very well – it has been doing so for 23 years, and now 150 issues. As a motoring writer, Australian motoring history is something that I am passionate about, and in order to do my job I need access to an extensive motoring library.

As for large scale motoring libraries that are accessible to the public, there are I believe only two in the country. There is the well-established Eric Rainsford Library that is part of the Sporting Car Club of South Australia (in Unley, Adelaide) – definitely worth a visit next time you're in the City of Churches. And there is the Australian Motoring Heritage Foundation (AMHF).

The AMHF was formed by Hugh King, a retired solicitor who pondered where to house his collection of 4,500 books and over 12,000 magazines. The answer was to set up a registered charity, seek like-minded enthusiasts to help organise and curate the collection, and find a home for it as well as broaden its scope. Those enthusiasts included the likes of historic racing artist Brian Caldersmith and former ARDC manager Brian Goulding, as well as the doyen of Australian motoring journalism, former *Wheels* magazine editor Peter Robinson. As for a home, the former administration building of the Australian Racing Driver's Club (ARDC) at Sydney Motorsport Park became vacant. The

Who could forget the memorable 'HO Down the Hume' story complete with the Uwe Kuessner photo of Nichols holding the steering wheel of the GTHO Phase III with the speedometer on the stops at 140 mph?

Paul Newby is a lifelong motor racing enthusiast and long time contributor to *AMC*

ARDC, which is a partner of the AMHF, offered the use of the entire building rent free.

I connected with Robbo in 2021 to write a breakout on the Falcon GTHO Phase III and a column on his illustrious career. The plan was to meet at the AMHF, but unfortunately Covid-19 put the kibosh on that! Later I organised for Robbo to give a talk at an Alfa Romeo club meeting. We were subsequently invited to inspect the AMHF with Robbo and Hugh King, who I remembered from my days working at the Motor Books bookshop in Cremorne. Hugh was always a good customer!

I was certainly interested in becoming more involved, but full-time work prevented me doing anything until last year when my world changed and I had more free time. The AMHF has a core group of volunteers who meet up on a Wednesday to sort and catalogue books, magazines, race programmes and press kits for cars and motorbikes. I'm now a regular volunteer and have been 'seconded' to assist Robbo to catalogue the immense press (kit) archive of publisher John Mellor's *GoAutoNews* that he kindly donated to AMHF.

Complete with the filing cabinets they lived in, this press archive arrived in a 20-foot shipping container! It is a mammoth task to sort through and record these press kits, which mainly date from the 1990s onwards but includes some older treasures. The aim is to separate any duplicates to sell off at a future date.

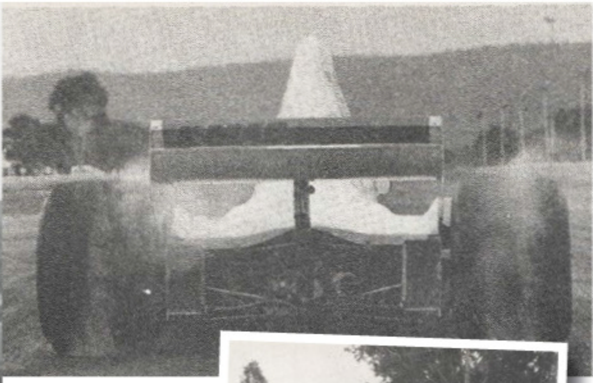
Spending my Wednesdays chatting to Robbo and other likeminded enthusiasts never gets boring. Even our esteemed editor drops in occasionally, ostensibly to do research for future features – he is a signed-up member, after all! Occasionally we have been treated to special guests speaking to our group at lunchtime.

A recent guest was expatriate Australian motoring journalist Mel Nichols. Regular readers will have noted his byline on the fabulous Night Charger feature that was published in *AMC #146* last year. To long time readers and serious enthusiasts, Nichols, who has lived in England for the past 50 years, needs no introduction. He was Associate Editor at *Wheels* magazine under Robbo in the early '70s and drove all the iconic Australian muscle cars of the era. Who could forget the memorable 'HO Down the Hume' story complete with the Uwe Kuessner photo of Nichols holding the steering wheel of the GTHO Phase III with the speedometer on the stops at 140 mph? Nichols likes to escape ol' Blighty in the colder months and head to warmer climes where he catches up with family and old friends like Robbo, who hosted our presentation *(above, below)* at the new Jack Myers Room at SMP's new Australian Motorsport Innovation Precinct before an appreciative audience.

In 1973 Nichols headed off to England via Sicily where he spectated at the last International Targa Florio race. Like a lot of Australian journalists, before and since, he found a home at the influential *CAR* magazine, where telling it how it is, was not necessarily the British way back then. He was editor from 1974 to 1981, when, as he put it, he was promoted to management and became a 'shiny bum'.

Nichols' fabulous stories of driving Italian supercars across Europe often appeared in *Wheels* and *Sports Car World* magazine of the era and entranced a generation of young enthusiasts like myself. These stories were collated into a book called *And the Revs Keep Rising*, which I have in my collection. As a personal aside, Nichols recalled that it was an Alfa Romeo 2000 GTV and not the muscle cars that he remembered most fondly from his time in Australia. He even bought one in the 1980s, ran it for a few years and wrote about it in *Supercar Classics* magazine (an offshoot of *CAR*.) It influenced me in buying my own 2000 GTV, which I still have.

The AMHF website www.motorheritage.org.au has plenty of interesting articles as well as information on the collection and how to get involved. If you live in Sydney and have the time it is worth checking out. I'll even introduce you to Robbo!



Muscle Mail

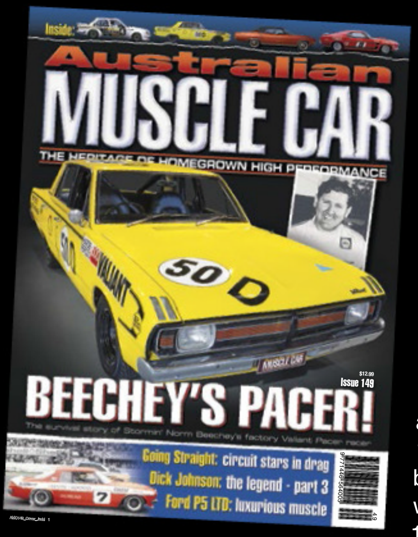
amceditorial@chevron.com.au | Locked Bag 5555, St Leonards NSW 1590

AMC BEST LETTER

Beecheymania

I enjoyed the features on Beechey in the last two magazines. Epic! I was at Sandown the day Beechey and Geoghegan pitted their Pacers on the first lap, which initially caused some dismay among those of us rooting for the underdog. Any number of things added to Beechey's mystique, and this race was no exception. *RCN* reported that the Toranas and the Pacers were going twice as deep into the corner at the end of the main straight than the heavier Falcons – if the flaring brake lights told us anything. The thing was that Beechey's car occasionally didn't show any at all!

A great follow-up to these articles would be another on Beechey's Chevy Impala. Its performance against the Jags was something to see. And its quickest lap around Sandown (1:25.2) was only matched by another large car, the two-door Galaxie, two years later.


Inside:
Australian
MUSCLE CAR
THE HERITAGE OF HOMEGROWN HIGH PERFORMANCE
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Issue 149
BEECHEY'S PACER!
The survival story of Stormin' Norm Beechey's factory Valiant Pacer racer
Going Straight: circuit stars in drag
Dick Johnson: the legend - part 3
Ford P5 LTD: luxurious muscle

Beechey's Chevy was a true heavyweight. His four-door hardtop was the heaviest model in the range, apart from the station wagon and convertible. The later 1963 Galaxie, that was raced by Lex Davison among others, was on a diet and was at least 100 kilos lighter. The 1962 Chevys drag racing in the States, with lightweight aluminium panels and the like were around 200-250 kilos lighter. While these cars turned the quarter mile in the low-12s, it's not too hard to understand why Beechey's Impala turned a best quarter mile time of 15.28s at the Geelong Sprints in August 1962. Along with the weight, there was the matter of not having the right tyres and a diff ratio which comprised its straight, quarter mile performance. But what it did it did well enough.

The Beechey Chev Impala stands as an icon in the history of Australian racing. So, an *AMC* cover with the big Chev on the front? Soon?

Rick Stone

ED: All we can say, Rick, is stay tuned!

AUSTRALIAN
INTERNATIONAL MEETING PREVIEW
Motor Sports and Automobiles
Norm Beechey
Burning the midnight oil

Going straight

Loved the article on circuit racers and their experiences on the drag strip. I have been involved with drag racing since the late 1970s and in road racing with a Group A Chev powered sports car since the mid 1980s. At Castlereagh drags I was there at the 1979 Australian Drag Racing Finals with Brian Hogan's Super Stock winning Monaro when John Wright in his F5000 Lola T400 did some exhibition runs. He ran in the 10.3-second zone at around 137mph. There is a great close-up photo of it from behind launching in a pictorial magazine called *Castlereagh's Fastest Summer* which I have.

These times stack up well with the F5000 times recorded by *MOTOR* magazine and its fifth wheel measurements.

Keep up the great content.

Frank Kanak
Email

ED: We somehow missed John Wright's F5000 run at Castlereagh, so thanks for setting us straight, Frank. Further investigation reveals that Racing Car News *also ran that pic of the Lola smoking the rears –* RCN *reported that Wright 'had the crowd on its feet and cheering loudly. They were particularly appreciated the Lola's ability to stop quickly and to execute a high speed turn at the end of each run'.*

Changing times

Congratulations on 150 issues of *Australian MUSCLE CAR*. It is a very high-quality magazine, and to have it printed in Australia makes it even better!

I just love the stories and pictures that you guys find and bring to life in this magazine. There are some great journalists and photographers out there that dig deep for the reader.

It's funny how our motoring scene in Australia has changed: the proud family-owned service station, the little corner used car yard, the family-run car dealership, have all gone by the wayside in the name of progress.

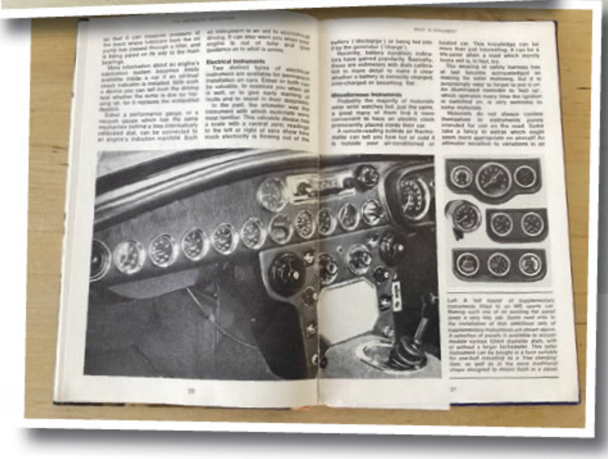
It might be a good idea to send a copy of the magazine to the Prime Minister and Opposition Leader, to remind them of the Australian car industry, and when we could design, engineer and build stuff in this country!

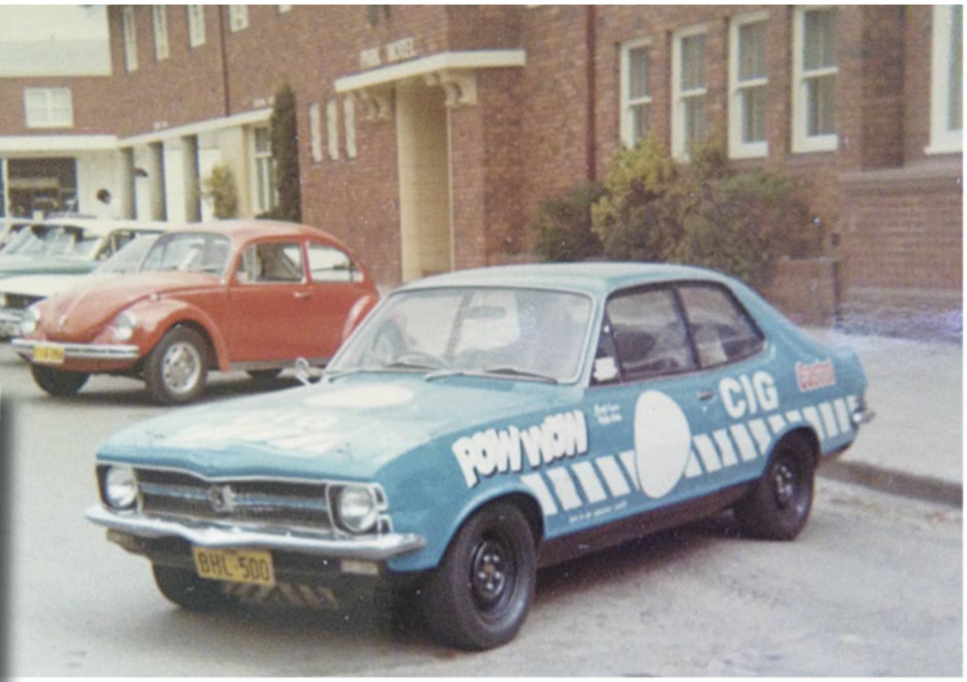
David Swiggs
Email

Dashboard mystery

Love your magazine and have all of them. Also over the years I have been lucky to

SMITHS
FULL HOUSE
THE DASHBOARD REVOLUTION
a practical guide to car instrumentation
introduction by Jackie Stewart
cartoons by Brockbank





have some of my letters published!

A car fanatic at an early age, I was always impressed by Smiths gauges and sent away for the very good little book of 96 pages, which came with two stickers which I still have.

That dashboard is an MGB and boy is it fully stocked with about 12 gauges! (through the years I have had many MGBs)

The print date in England was April 1970, so your ad probably took that pic from that book.

In the same issue, I enjoyed the article on the Digby Cooke/Geoff Leeds Torana LC XU-1. I was there at Bathurst in 1971, and took the attached photos. Some aren't too good but may bring back memories. The LC Torana was the one in your article but with PowWow signage outside the Park Hotel in Bathurst.

Could the guys in Torana have zipped into the hotel for a quick beer?

You will also notice that all Charger and Torana cars are road registered, so no problem driving to the pub: the Torana is NSW BHL-500, the Chargers were (SA reg), RDM-558 for the Beechey car, RDM-559 Leo Geoghegan and the Geoghegan/Brown car RDM-560.

Paul Oliver
Email

Dashboard mystery 2

In issue 150 on page 106 you show a copy of a *Modern Motor* October 1973 advertisement for Smiths in which you state the dashboard shown is unlikely to be that of a Camaro and ask a rhetorical question if anybody knows what car the Dashboard is from. I believe the dashboard shown is an MGB (albeit not a standard dashboard – by that I mean modified with additional gauges).

Whilst not an official competition you do ask for reader input. So if I'm correct, what have I won?

Also in regard to issue 150, page 8 article on John French, I'm sure that I'm not the first person to point out this month that it was not 1980 (as that was the year of 'The Rock') but 1981 when he and Dick Johnson won Bathurst. Obviously that mistake slipped past the keeper.

Thanks for a great magazine full of good old stories and photos. Send all cash prizes, free tickets and merchandise to my address as per your Subscriber information on your records.

Ian McDonald
Email

ED: Sadly no prize for solving the mystery of the 'Camaro' dashboard, Ian, but you are almost certain correct that it was an MGB. And you are absolutely right about the error in the John French obituary – a typo here at AMC that definitely 'slipped past the keeper'.

Playboy Hardtop

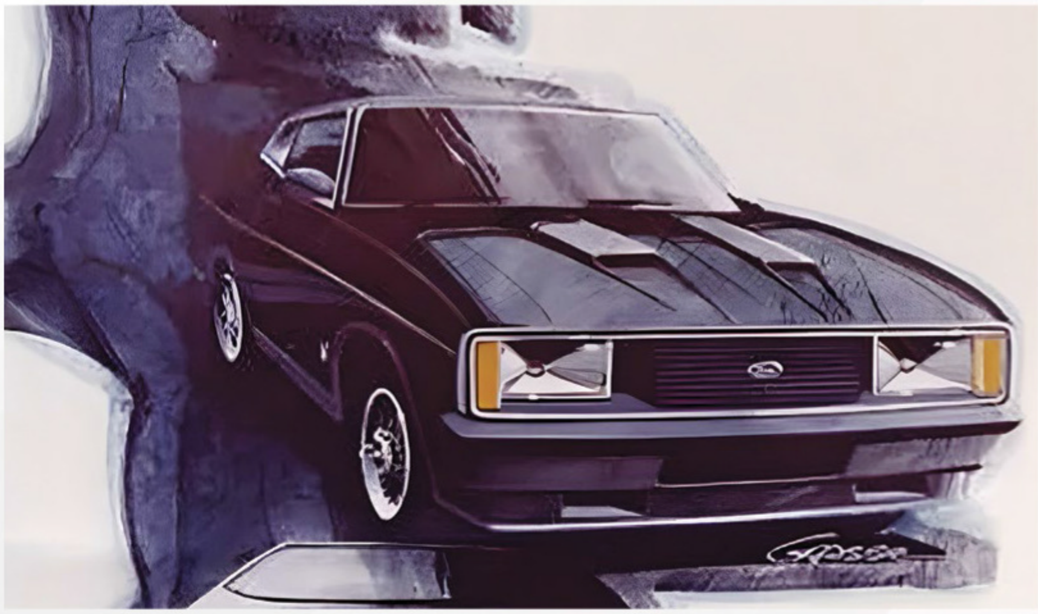
I read The Playboy Special feature with interest and make the following observations.

I don't believe there would have been any connection with *Australian Playboy* magazine, which was launched with great fanfare by Kerry Packer's Consolidated Press Holdings in January, 1979, almost two years after the XC Hardtop was produced. It seems incongruous today that *Australian Playboy* could exist alongside Ita Buttrose's Women's Weekly, but they were different times…

Previous owner of the XC Hardtop, Graham Harrison of Geelong, had owned a Copper Bronze XB GT Hardtop that he used to trailer his Gil Gordon Alfa-sponsored Group C Alfa Romeo 2000 GTV. I interviewed Harrison and Gordon in Geelong back in 2012. Harrison told me that at a Sandown meeting the scrutineers asked if they could fit a rear wheel from Allan Moffat's racing Hardtop under the arch at his XB GT. When they did the wheel was jammed in the wheelarch – something that wouldn't have occurred with the XC! Apparently, Moffat was not amused.

Lorraine Star's Relaxation Centre (yes, really!) was a sponsor of Harrison's Alfa Romeo (the signage can be seen on the car's bootlid) and a great supporter of the team. Gordon sold her his beloved exotic V8-engined Alfa Montreal. This came in handy at a sodden Sandown meeting when Harrison was bereft of a set of 'wet' tyres. Ms Star was happy for the Montreal to be jacked up for the weekend and the road wheels and tyres used on the race car!

Paul Newby
Email



Gil GORDON
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alfa
GEELONG
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BRIDGESTONE

150 issues

Congratulations on reaching this remarkable milestone. *AMC* came out at a time when new magazines were lucky to last a couple of years at best, and I honestly thought *AMC* would be the same. Even after a couple years of print, I could not see the magazine lasting and thought there could not possibly be enough content, topics, history, pictures etc to sustain it. I was wrong and each issue I'm amazed at the content and the detail.

I've learnt a lot about the rich motor racing history Australia has. I have all 150 issues and was horrified a year or two back when I discovered some issues were missing (3,35 & 54). I have sourced these and the collection is restored! The magazine section at my local newsagent is getting smaller each year. I hope AMC remains in printed format and keeps going for many more years. Thank you for such a great mag.

Emil Jukic
Email

150 issues 2

I am thinking a basket full of accolades, (in lieu of Easter Eggs), would be an appropriate presentation to yourself, Mark and Luke, for your joint efforts in initially creating, and then maintaining, the high publication standard that encapsulates all that *Australian MUSCLE CAR* is about. Well done!

Garry Waldon was just a name on the side of a race car for many of us spectators of yesteryear, albeit one that was around for a fair while. Luke West's piece on this guy reveals a back story, (flowers), that is truly significant.

Considering the massive effort put in by himself and his wife to maintain that business over such a long period, through all sorts of inclement weather, it must have made the motor racing side of life seem like just a Sunday afternoon hobby!

In the same issue, Mark Oastler's review of FoMoCo Australia's six-cylinder 'hotrod' of 2004 highlights some of the issues Mark Behr faced in trying to give the car a low key, but high-performance presence. Certainly the previously-introduced BA shape had overcome most of the AU model's appearance downsides, but that basic body shell was becoming a bit dated, and as we know Ford Australia never introduced a completely new model like Holden did, preferring to run with cosmetic updates till Falcon production ceased.

That steering wheel design never suited the image of the F6, but cost wise to change it probably would have been prohibitive for a low volume model. And externally the 3/4 rear shape including door surrounds and general roof curvature looked decidedly too much AU, which I think it was.

But the F6 pretty much was the 'ducks guts' for local product on-road performance.

Eric Waples
Email

Inside:
Australian
MUSCLE CAR
THE HERITAGE OF HOMEGROWN HIGH PERFORMANCE
150
Issue 150
QUICKSILVER!
Z06 · Chevy's ultimate street-legal Corvette
Drags: Going Ford is... the Real Thing
Bathurst XU-1: '71 survivor
Typhoon watch: F6 - 20 years on

Grice didn't win

I picked up an error in the Scalextric ad in the inside back cover of issue 150. The FAI Commodore is wrongly described as the '1988 Bathurst Winner'. The 1988 winner was actually Longhurst/Mezera in a Sierra.

Terry Sullivan
Email

ED: True, Terry, it very much wasn't Gricey's day that year (although the '88 Tooheys 1000 it turned out to be two years either side of both his Bathurst wins). Mightn't have been a winner but it was a nice looking VL, and the Scalextric version is a stunner.

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BOWDEN'S OWN
PREMIUM AUSSIE CAR CARE

This issue's Muscle Mail best letter winner receives a Bowden's Own Prize Pack

THE BIG GREEN SUCKER
SHAGTASTIC WASH PAD
BIG SOFTIE
BIG SOFTIE
FLASH PREP
BEAD MACHINE
NANOLICIOUS WASH

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XR8 SPRINT
Ford

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SATURDAY 26TH JULY: DRAG RACING FROM 10AM (FORD POWERED VEHICLES ONLY)
SUNDAY 27TH JULY: CAR SHOW AND CONCOURS DISPLAY FROM 9AM
(ALL FORD SHOW VEHICLES ENTER FROM 7AM)

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FALCON GT
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VICTORIA

100 Fordta

AMC salutes Ford Australia as the Blue Oval celebrates the milestone of its 100th year of operation down under.

Story: Steve Normoyle **Photoshoot:** Dishan Marikar **Images:** Ford Australia Archives, Ford Heritage Vault

9
MOFFAT FORD DEAL
BP
FALCON

FALCON XR6

TSH 173

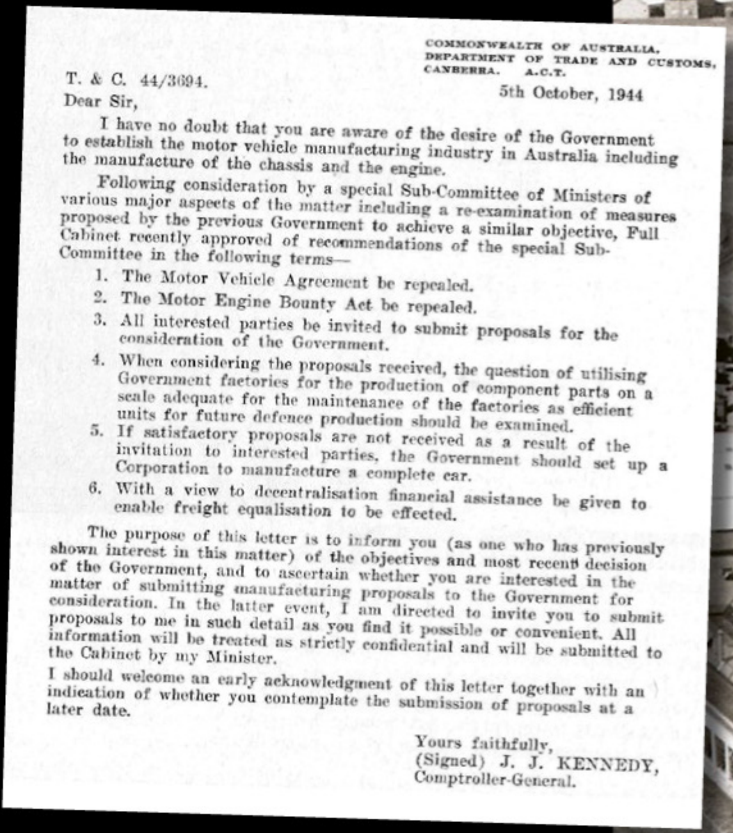
FPV
GTF
VIC GTF 210
FORD PERFORMANCE VEHICLES

stic
years

Holden is – or was – universally known as 'Australia's Own Car'. In truth, it's a spurious claim. For one thing, General Motors-Holden was no more an Australian company, nor any less an American subsidiary, than Ford Australia. It's true that the 48-215 Holden was the first car to be wholly manufactured in this country. However, in late 1948 when the Holden was unveiled, Ford had been assembling vehicles here for some *23 years*.

What's more, had the political machinations of the mid-1940s played out differently, when prime minister Ben Chifley proudly launched the new 'Australian car' in November, 1948, it could have been a Ford he was celebrating, and not the new GM Holden.

In 1945, when the federal government was laying the plans for Australia's post-war manufacturing sector, a crucial decision was taken that set the course for the future. The government had put the word out to industry that it wanted a locally manufactured 'Australian' car, and that there would be government support for such a venture – and that if there wasn't any interest, the government would form a company and build its own Australian car. Ford threw its hat into the ring, as did Nuffield (BMC) and GM-H.



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.
DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND CUSTOMS,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

T. & C. 44/3694.

5th October, 1944

Dear Sir,

I have no doubt that you are aware of the desire of the Government to establish the motor vehicle manufacturing industry in Australia including the manufacture of the chassis and the engine.

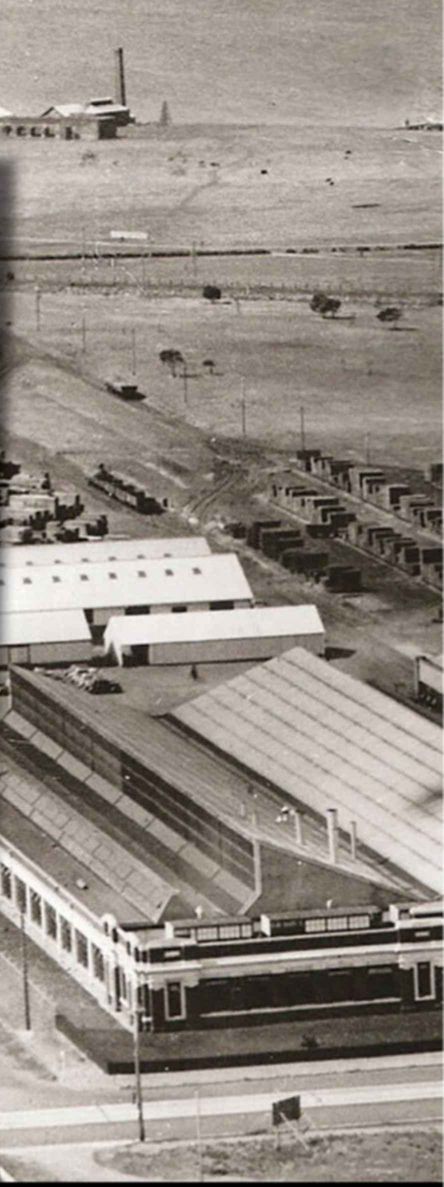
Following consideration by a special Sub-Committee of Ministers of various major aspects of the matter including a re-examination of measures proposed by the previous Government to achieve a similar objective, Full Cabinet recently approved of recommendations of the special Sub-Committee in the following terms—

1. The Motor Vehicle Agreement be repealed.
2. The Motor Engine Bounty Act be repealed.
3. All interested parties be invited to submit proposals for the consideration of the Government.
4. When considering the proposals received, the question of utilising Government factories for the production of component parts on a scale adequate for the maintenance of the factories as efficient units for future defence production should be examined.
5. If satisfactory proposals are not received as a result of the invitation to interested parties, the Government should set up a Corporation to manufacture a complete car.
6. With a view to decentralisation financial assistance be given to enable freight equalisation to be effected.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you (as one who has previously shown interest in this matter) of the objectives and most recent decision of the Government, and to ascertain whether you are interested in the matter of submitting manufacturing proposals to the Government for consideration. In the latter event, I am directed to invite you to submit proposals to me in such detail as you find it possible or convenient. All information will be treated as strictly confidential and will be submitted to the Cabinet by my Minister.

I should welcome an early acknowledgment of this letter together with an indication of whether you contemplate the submission of proposals at a later date.

Yours faithfully,
(Signed) J. J. KENNEDY,
Comptroller-General.



Above: The 1944 government letter to industry inviting submissions for manufacturing a car in Australia. Ford proposed a V8 sedan based on its Lincoln Mercury but instead GM-H got the nod - the 48-215 Holden was the result. Right: The Ford Geelong plant in 1936. Ford was assembling cars there for 23 years before the first Holden rolled off the GM-H production line.

In truth, it had been GM-H's managing director Lawrence Hartnett who'd first promoted the idea of an Australian-made car. But that didn't make GM-H's approval a certainty. The government considered the merits of each company's proposal; in the end GM-H got the nod.

At the risk of oversimplifying what was a complex process involving a wide range of considerations, the decision could easily have gone the other way. Ultimately, had Ford not asked for certain tariff protections which the government was reluctant to grant, it's possible that 'Australia's Own' might not have been the six-cylinder '48-model Holden, but rather a V8 Ford derived from a mid '40s Lincoln Mercury design.

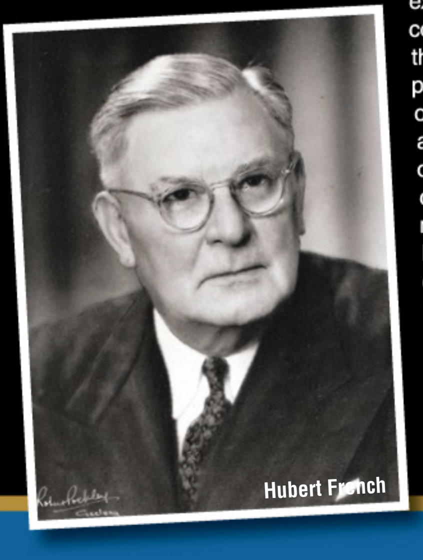
Just as Hartnett is considered the father of the Holden (as managing director from 1934 till the mid '40s, Hartnett built the Fishermans Bend plant, and then lobbied strenuously to convince a disinterested GM New York head office that an Australian-made car would be profitable), Ford Australia owes its existence to the foresight and efforts of one man: Hubert French.

A French affair

French was a senior Ford executive despatched to Australia in 1923 to investigate the flagging sales of Model T Fords down under – and amid concerning reports that rival American car maker General Motors had completed a virtual takeover of the Holden Motor Body Builders plant in Adelaide. Holden versus Ford, way back in the 1920s…

French and his Ford (engineering) colleague Mel Brooks undertook an exhaustive five-month tour of Australia. With a Model T for transportation, they traversed the then-dirt tracks from Sydney to Brisbane and then back down to Melbourne; they went to Perth, Adelaide, and to Tasmania. It was as much a fact-finding mission about the country as it was an assessment of the Ford dealer situation.

The situation, they discovered, was bad. In a ramshackle array of distributors and dealers, Model Ts were selling here for more than three times the equivalent price in North America; servicing and repair prices were also exorbitant. There was anti-competitive behaviour among the bigger dealers, and a plethora of smaller owner/operator mechanics acting as Ford dealers who not only were ill-equipped to sell cars (because they were mechanics, not salesmen), but also had little incentive to even bother trying because they were being squeezed by the distributors to accept tiny profit margins on each car sold.



Hubert French

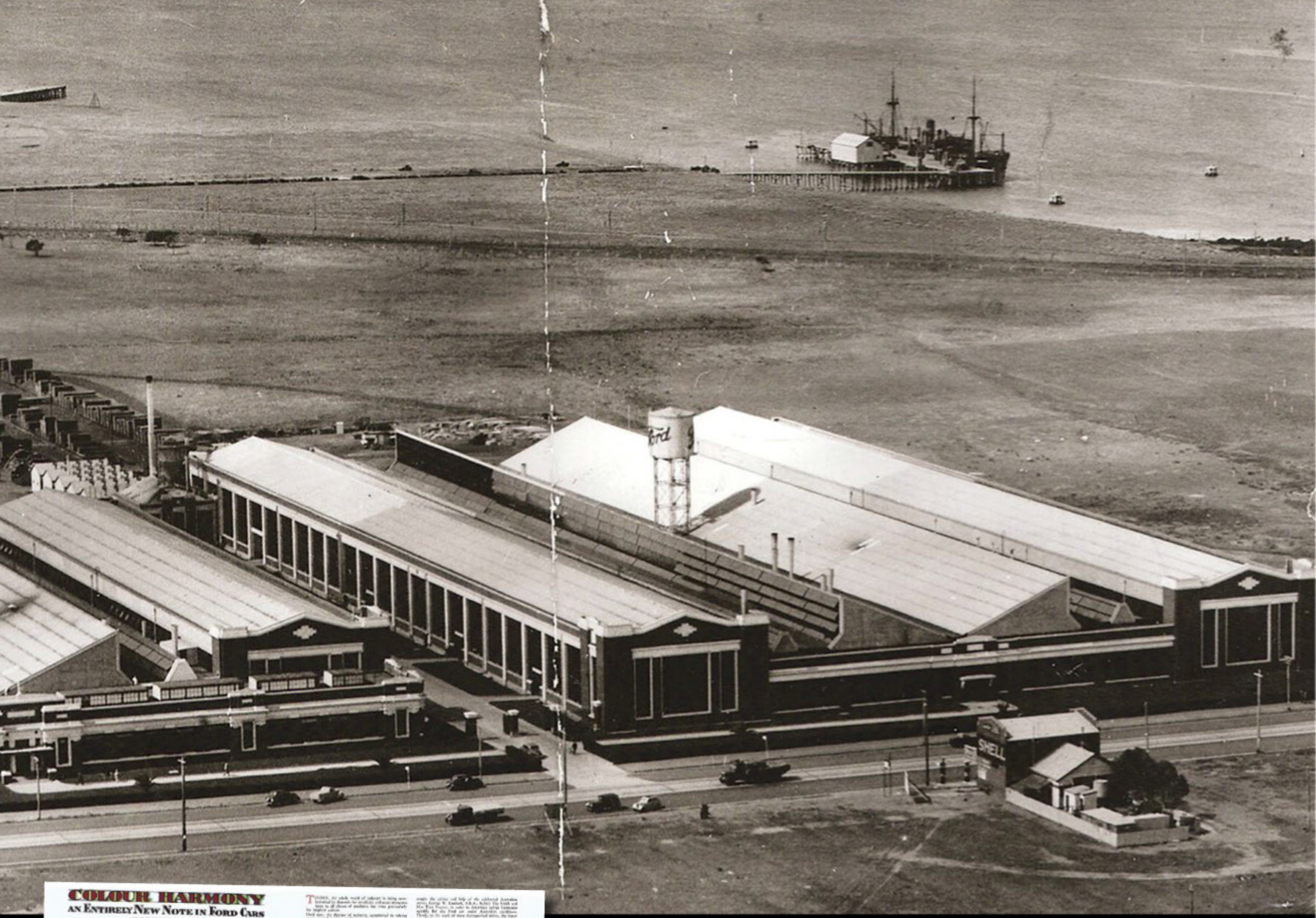
"Since my arrival in Australia," French wrote in his journal, "the word distributor has come to mean nothing more nor less than a bunch of easy living, luxury loving, and opulent directors, whose only thought is to squeeze more profits out of the business without a vestige of a thought of the future welfare of the Ford Motor Company. A band of vultures who will stoop to anything to satisfy their greedy hunger for profits."

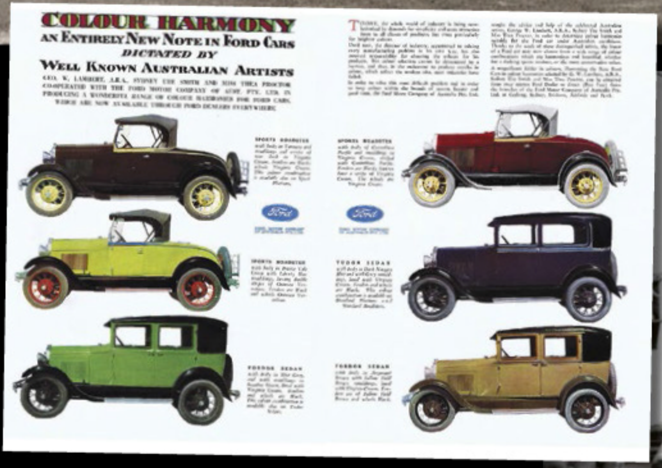
It was agreed, then, that Ford would establish its own Australian operation.

French was charged with the task of setting up the new company, of which he would be the first managing director. The new Ford Australia business would be answerable not to Detroit but rather Ford's Canadian operation. The reason for this was that Canada was where Ford built its right-hand-drive models (for the UK market) and, being as Canada (like Australia) was part of the British Empire, that country fell under Australia's 'most favoured nation' tariff regime (whereas the USA did not).

French initially favoured Tasmania as the site of Ford Australia's headquarters but ultimately Geelong was chosen. Work began on the Geelong factory in 1925. At the same time plots

"A band of vultures who will stoop to anything to satisfy their greedy hunger for profits." - Hubert French on the early Ford distributors.





COLOUR HARMONY

AN ENTIRELY NEW NOTE IN FORD CARS

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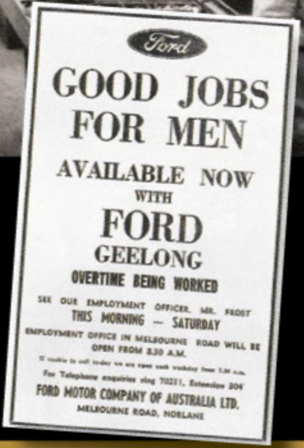
of land in Homebush in Sydney, and Eagle Farm in Brisbane, were secured as sites for additional Ford manufacturing facilities in the future.

In the meantime, before Geelong was operational more than 12,000 Model Ts were assembled in a series of makeshift plants: in Dalgety's Wool store in Geelong; in a freezing works in Camellia in Sydney (just up the road from the future Parramatta Speedway); in a warehouse in Fremantle and in an abandoned brewery in Hobart.

Establishing the Geelong plant entailed a huge investment. Worryingly, after the facility was operational and assembling new vehicles, and French had reformed and restructured the dealer network, the new company immediately sustained large losses. In 1926 Ford Australia achieved barely a third of its predicted Model T sales.

But a big part of the responsibility for the failure fell on the shoulders of Ford itself. Henry Ford, that is: the Ford Motor Company founder's stubborn reluctance to replace his beloved T-Model with an all-new model had allowed his competitors with more modern offerings the chance to steal Ford's market share. In 1926 the Model T was nearly 20 years old – there'd been Model Ts on Australian roads from as early as 1909.

The all-new A-Model Ford in 1928 was a welcome arrival that helped turn Ford



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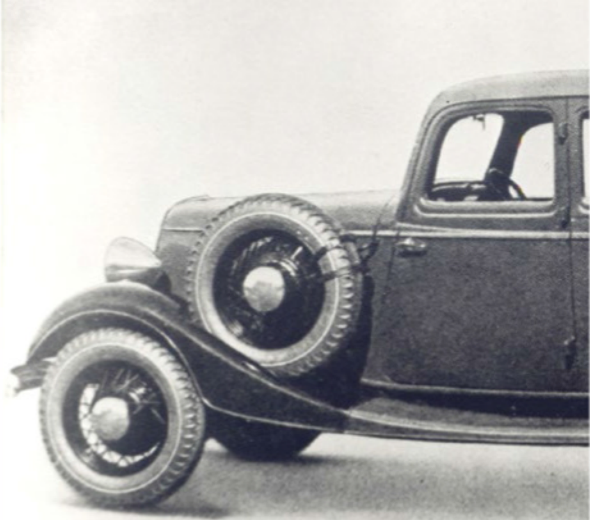
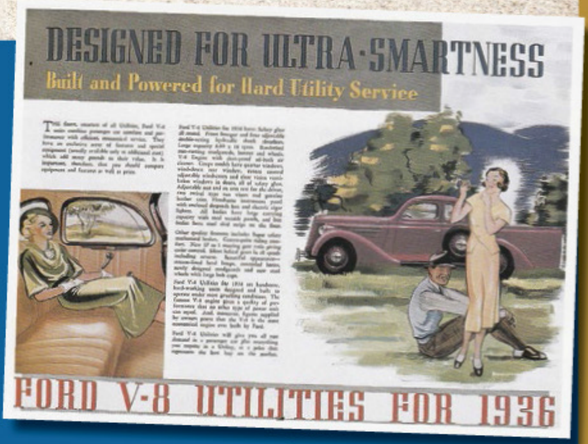
Ute creator Lew Bandt's restored replica of the first 1934 ute poses with a late-model Ranger.



The Ford ute - a vehicle to go to church in on Sunday and carry the pigs to market on Monday.

How the Ute was born



DESIGNED FOR ULTRA-SMARTNESS

Built and Powered for Hard Utility Service

FORD V-8 UTILITIES FOR 1936

Sir Lawrence Hartnett believed that he and GM-H invented the 'Ute'.

Hartnett's Ute 'origin' story is of a farmer struggling to make ends meet in the Depression in 1934 being knocked back by his bank for finance on a new Chevrolet the local Gundagai GM-H dealer was trying to sell him. In his book *Big Wheels and Little Wheels* Hartnett paraphrased the bank manager: 'We're not going to let him buy a passenger car to take his missus around and go to the movies every night. Let him get a job instead'.

As a farmer, the man already had a farm truck; the bank wasn't prepared to finance a second vehicle. Hartnett's solution was to create a dual-purpose 'coupe utility'. He had GM-H's body service department modify an older model roadster, so that it had a snug all-metal, sealed cabin, and carry tray at the back. The bank was sold on the idea; the farmer got his Chevrolet. A year later when Hartnett returned to Gundagai, he noted that most of the vehicles he saw parked in the street were coupe utilities.

But this wasn't how the Ute was born. While there's some conjecture generally over who in fact did come up with the concept in the first place, in Australia Ford beat GM-H with its Ute by at least a year.

In 1932 Hubert French received a letter from the wife of a Gippsland farmer. Annoyed that she had to endure travelling in an open-sided farm truck in the rain in winter, she wrote to the Ford boss: 'Why don't you build people like us a vehicle to go to church in on a Sunday and which can carry our pigs to market on Mondays?'

French passed the letter to his sales manager, Scott Inglis (father of Brian, later to be knighted after a career that saw him become the first Australian managing director of Ford Australia). Inglis and the Ford plant's superintendent, Slim Westman, considered the woman's request.

Westman ruled out building a cut-down car with a tray on the back, figuring that the chassis would break in half under the extra weight of the livestock.

At the time there was only one designer at Ford Australia: 22-year-old Lewis T Bandt. It was Bandt who came up with the concept of a coupe utility.

"I told him (Westman) I would design it with a frame that came from the very back pillar, through the central pillars, near the doors," Bandt is quoted in Geoff Easdown's book, *A history of the Ford Motor Company in Australia*. "I would arrange for another pillar to further strengthen that weak point where the cabin and the tray are joined.

"I said, 'Boss: Them pigs are going to have a luxury ride around the city of Geelong.'"

Bandt's design, with a comfortable all-weather cabin combined with a rear tray with a payload of over 500kg, hit the spot. Before long, the coupe utility was the vehicle of choice for anyone working on the land.

Later on, two Ford Utes were shipped from Geelong to the US for evaluation by Henry Ford himself. Bandt, who accompanied the vehicles on the trip to the Ford Rouge plant in Detroit, recalled: "Mr Ford called in his men from Texas. They took one look at it and asked: 'what's that?' Mr Ford replied: 'it's a kangaroo chaser', and told them he was about to build a model there."

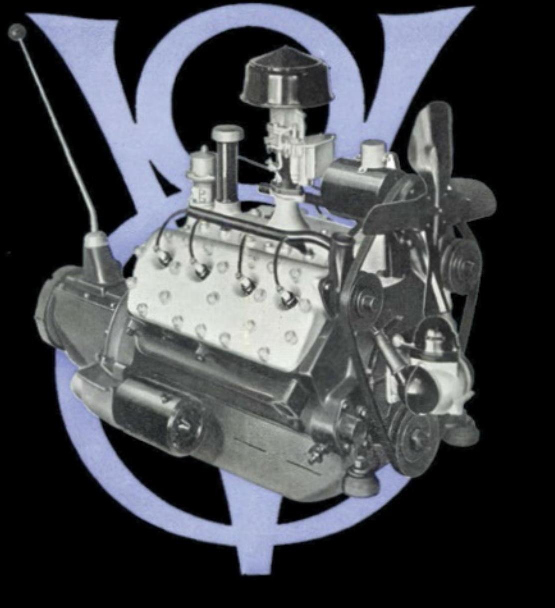
Lewis Bandt (standing)

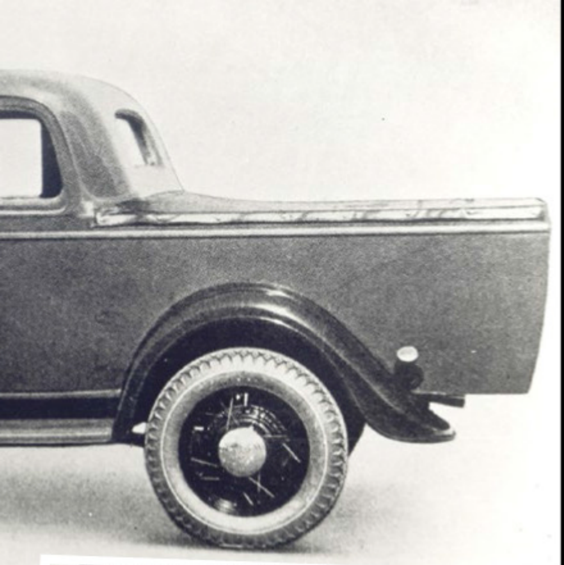
Australia's fortunes around. Its new 3.3-litre four-cylinder engine could outrun its Chevrolet rival, and it was less expensive than the Chev. The Model A was such a sensation that 8000 people travelled to Geelong for the official launch! Between 1928 and '32, more than 30,000 Model A Fords were assembled at Geelong – a figure that would have been much higher had it not been for the Great Depression.

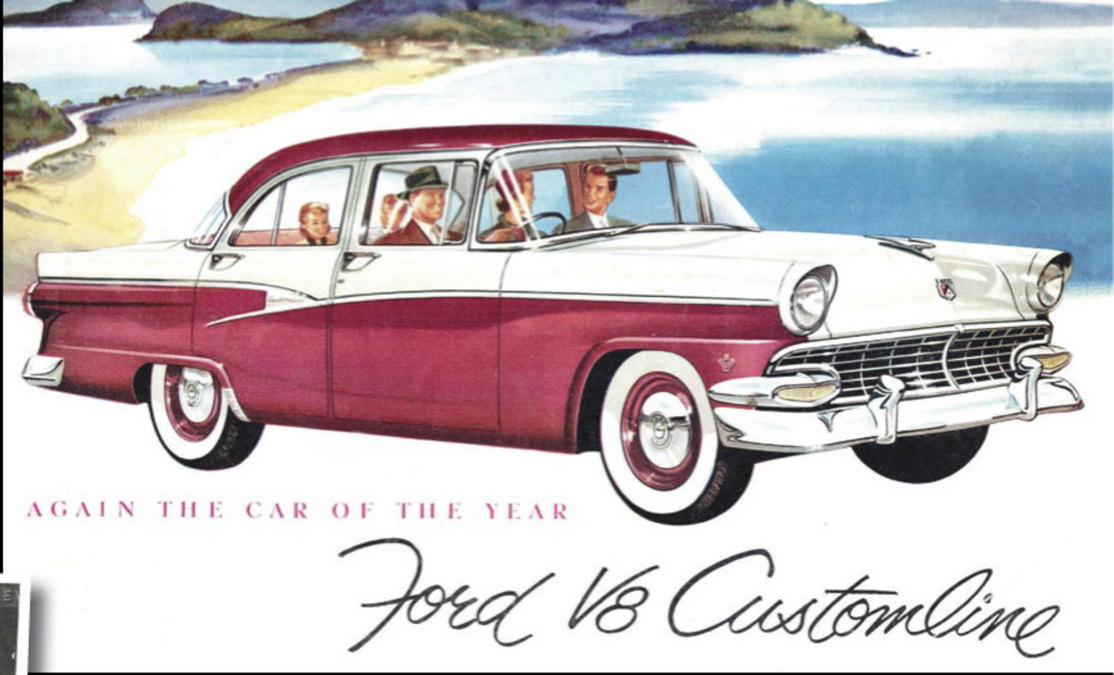
Then later in the 1930s came the ground-breaking 3.6-litre V8 option. The classic side-valve 'flathead' Ford V8 was literally power to the people – genuinely affordable high performance. The flathead Ford engine would form the basis of the emerging hotrod scene, and soon found its way into almost every conceivable motorsport application. More than any other, it's the production engine that popularised the V8 as the configuration synonymous with affordable grunt in a simple, compact and relatively lightweight package. It was Ford's V8 engine for the next 20 years.

During the Second World War, Ford's five manufacturing plants (Geelong, Homebush, Eagle Farm, Adelaide and Fremantle) were (like GM-H) given over to war production. Hubert French figured that Geelong needed a new machine shop and plant extensions to meet the war effort, and went ahead with it without approval from Canada. "There's no time for red tape," he said. "I'll deal with Canada when the war is over."

For the war effort Ford's factories turned out whatever was needed: armoured cars based







AGAIN THE CAR OF THE YEAR

Ford V8 Customline

Above: Like GM-H, during the second world war Ford Australia made whatever was needed for the war effort. Top, below: Into the post-war 1950s Ford Australia offered a wide variety of models but struggled amid the soaring popularity of the 'Australia's Own' Holden.

> **With a model range across the 1950s that included the small Anglia, mid-sized Prefect and Consul, the Holden-sized Zephyr, the V8-powered Custom and later the Y-Block V8 Customline, most of them assembled here, there was seemingly a Ford for everyone.**

on Ford V8 trucks, guns, marine mines, landing craft, aircraft components and even Ford V8-powered tanks.

Shortages in the immediate post-war period forced Ford Australia to resort to bringing in Ford Pilot models from the UK in the late '40s. The Pilot was an unremarkable, and outdated, (1936) UK model fitted with a low-spec side-valve V8, but at the time that's all Geelong could get from the wider Ford empire.

Things soon changed; by the mid-'50s Ford was assembling 12 different models across four plants. It was also now building V8 engines at Geelong. Getting Canadian head office approval to invest in V8 engine production in Australia had been an early win for Charles Smith in his tenure as managing director (Hubert French retired in 1950).

But by the mid '50s Ford had found itself in a vexed position. With a model range across that decade that included the small Anglia, mid-sized Prefect and Consul, the Holden-sized Zephyr, the V8-powered Custom and later the Y-Block V8 Customline, most of them assembled here, there was seemingly a Ford for everyone. By comparison, GM-H effectively had just the one Holden model, which wasn't available in a Ute body style until 1951, or a panel van till 1953. Yet GM-H was selling Holdens as fast as they could make them. And once GM-H really got going and started boosting production to meet the demand for 'Australia's Own', Ford's comparable (if slightly more expensive) Mk I Zephyr couldn't compete. As Holden sales soared, Ford's market share fell below 10 percent.

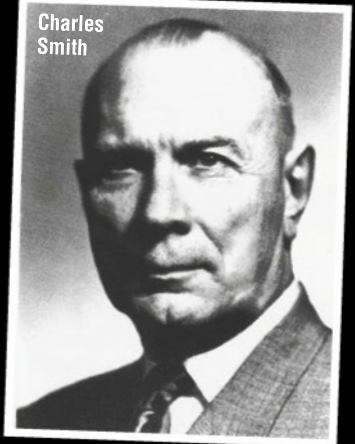
The indifferent quality of some of the Ford models didn't help. For example, in country-road driving the shock absorber rubbers on early '50s Custom V8s wore out after only 300km! In similar driving conditions, Mk I Consul differentials were barely good for 3000km…

Falcon takes flight

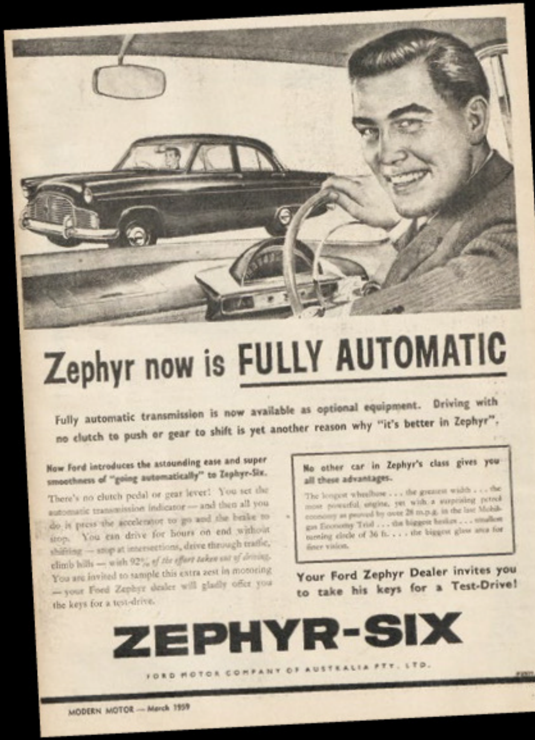
Charles Smith realised that Ford had to start manufacturing cars in Australia, for Australian conditions, if it were to compete with GM-H. To that end, head office in Canada approved Smith's plan to build a new manufacturing facility at Broadmeadows. Geelong reverted to an engine manufacturing and development centre; Broadmeadows would be where they'd make the vehicles.

The new plant opened in 1959. Initially it was used for the assembly of 'Tank' Fairlanes, Zephyrs, Anglias and Consuls until the first Australian-made Ford model was locked in. Initially it was going to be the Mk III Zephyr, but Smith wasn't convinced by the Zephyr's styling. Then he was shown the stylish looking new American compact Falcon – and was sold.

Future managing director Brian Inglis at the time was Ford Australia's



Charles Smith



Zephyr now is FULLY AUTOMATIC

Fully automatic transmission is now available as optional equipment. Driving with no clutch to push or gear to shift is yet another reason why "it's better in Zephyr".

Now Ford introduces the astounding ease and super smoothness of "going automatically" to Zephyr-Six.

There's no clutch pedal or gear lever! You set the automatic transmission indicator — and then all you do is press the accelerator to go and the brake to stop. You can drive for hours on end without shifting — stop at intersections, drive through traffic, climb hills — with 92% *of the effort taken out of driving.* You are invited to sample this extra zest in motoring — your Ford Zephyr dealer will gladly offer you the keys for a test-drive.

No other car in Zephyr's class gives you all these advantages.

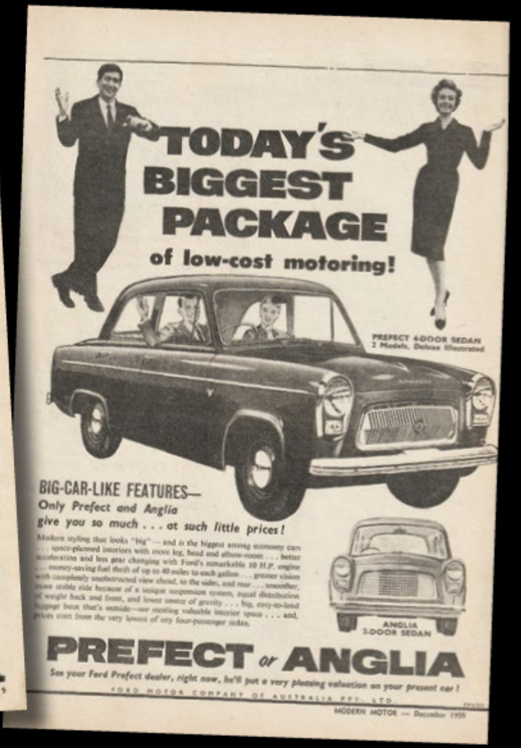
The longest wheelbase . . . the greatest width . . . the most powerful engine, yet with a surprising petrol economy as proved by over 28 m.p.g. in the last Mobilgas Economy Trial . . . the biggest brakes . . . smallest turning circle of 36 ft. . . . the biggest glass area for finer vision.

Your Ford Zephyr Dealer invites you to take his keys for a Test-Drive!

ZEPHYR-SIX

FORD MOTOR COMPANY OF AUSTRALIA PTY. LTD.

MODERN MOTOR — March 1959



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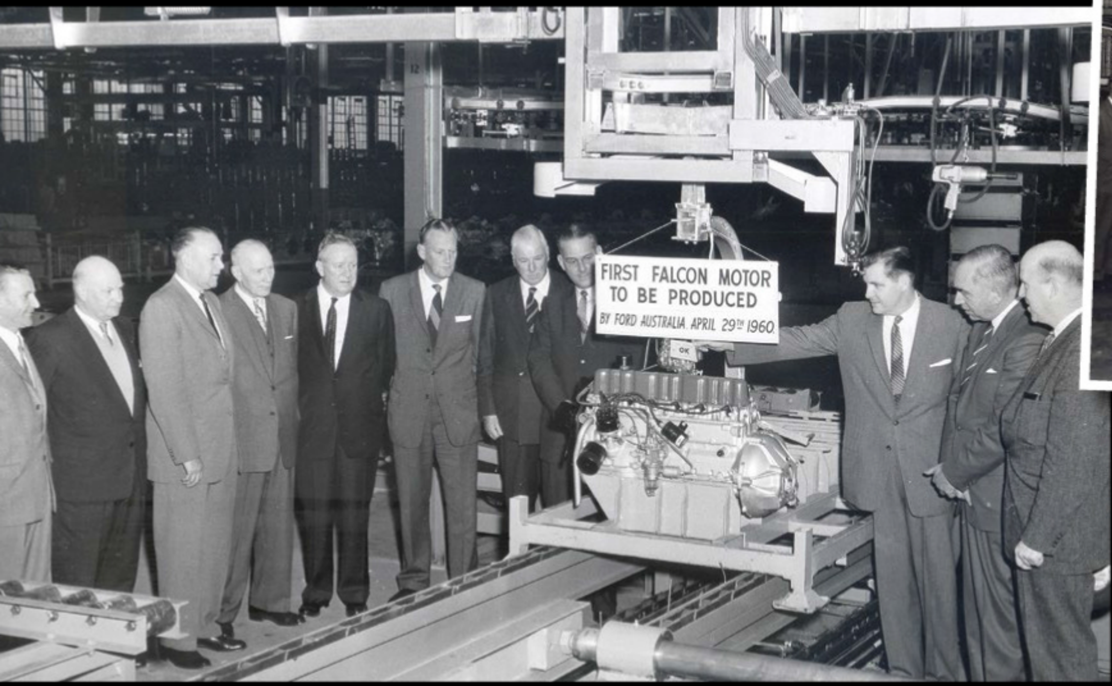
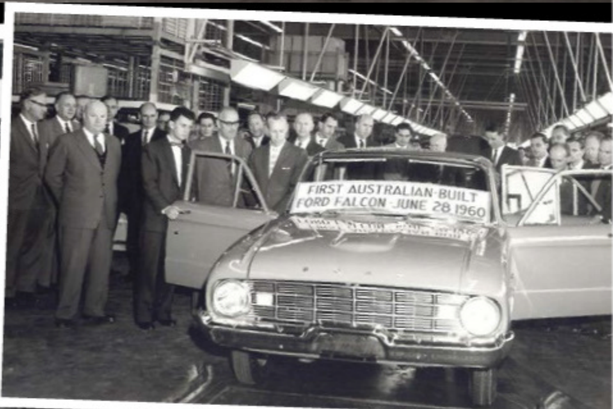
MODERN MOTOR — December 1959

Charles Smith realised that Ford had to start manufacturing cars in Australia, for Australian conditions, if it were to compete with GM-H.





Twelve years after the Holden was born, Ford Australia delivered its own locally-manufactured car, the 1960 Falcon XK. Unfortunately the stylish new Falcon had some major durability issues that weren't properly sorted until the 1965 XP model (below) - which was good enough to win the coveted Wheels magazine Car Of The Year award.

manufacturing director. He had misgivings about the Falcon as being less robust than the Zephyr – observations that would turn out to be accurate. Given the dreadful durability of the early Australian XK-L Falcons, not opting for the sturdier Zephyr might have been a mistake – especially as it came with options such as front disc brakes and floor-shift, four-speed transmission.

The Australian-made XK Falcon was launched in September 1960. Nearly 40 journalists were flown to Melbourne for the lavish media unveiling in the Bamboo Room of the then-fashionable Chevron Hotel, with a bevy of scantily clad dancing girls; on the tables were tankards, ties, tie bars and socks bearing the Falcon logo.

The excitement soon dissipated, however, once it became clear that behind the Falcon's shiny exterior lurked some serious mechanical deficiencies (such the inadequate front ball-joint suspension system). The new locally-made Ford quickly became known for its unreliability; many of those who bought an early Falcon weren't inclined to replace it later on with a newer model.

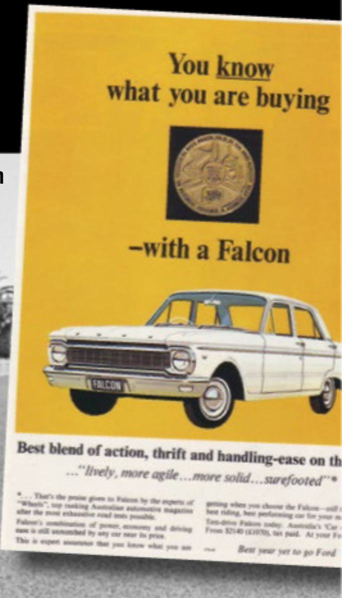
The arrival of Wallace Booth as new managing director in 1963 proved a pivotal moment. With his assistant, Bill Bourke, Booth not only addressed the Falcon's mechanical shortcomings but gave the Ford brand a touch of excitement.

Bourke's bold 70,000-mile durability test *(see breakout)* was almost a case of too much excitement, but in the end it was exactly what Ford Australia needed.

It proved to the public that the XP really was the real deal, a message that was backed up by *Wheels* magazine which named it 1965 Car Of The Year. By August that year Ford's market share had risen to nearly 19 percent, as Holden's fell by nearly 4 percent (to 30 percent).

The XP represented a recalibration for Ford Australia – it was probably the kind of car the Falcon should have been in 1960. But the next model, the XR, was the real game changer.

XP Falcon

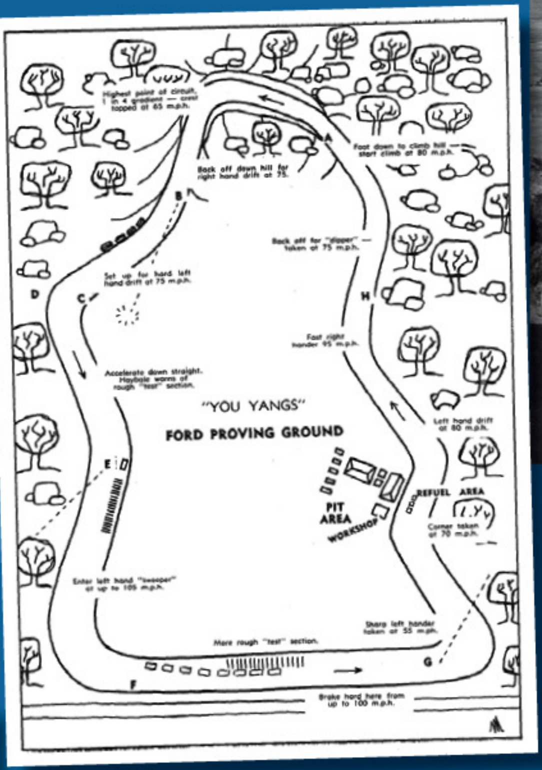

You know what you are buying

–with a Falcon

Best blend of action, thrift and handling-ease on th

…"lively, more agile…more solid…surefooted"*

Best year yet to go Ford


Highest point of circuit, 1 in 4 gradient — crest topped at 65 m.p.h.
A
Foot down to climb hill — start climb at 80 m.p.h.
Back off down hill for right hand drift at 75.
B
Back off for "dipper" — taken at 75 m.p.h.
Set up for hard left hand drift at 75 m.p.h.
D
C
H
Fast right hander 95 m.p.h.
Accelerate down straight. Haybale warns of rough "test" section.
"YOU YANGS"
FORD PROVING GROUND
Left hand drift at 80 m.p.h.
E
REFUEL AREA
PIT AREA
WORKSHOP
Corner taken at 70 m.p.h.
Enter left hand "sweeper" at up to 105 m.p.h.
Sharp left hander taken at 55 m.p.h.
More rough "test" section.
G
F
Brake hard here from up to 100 m.p.h.

The 70,000-mile gamble

By the mid 1960s, Ford's bid to take on Holden with its own locally made car looked like it might have failed. The dreadful unreliability of the XK and XL models had ruined the new Falcon's reputation. Fleet buyers deserted it to return to Holden, and even though the XM was much improved – and the 1965 XP was better again – the damage had been done.

The solution was to put it all on the line in a bold do-or-die gamble to prove the new XP Falcon really was tough. The 1965 Falcon-Mobil 70,000 Mile (112,000km) Durability Run was that pivotal punt.

The idea came from Ford's dynamic new marketing executive, Bill Bourke. As audacious as it was, it was also a pretty good way to christen Ford's brand new You Yangs proving ground – even if the You Yangs facility itself threatened to bring the whole thing undone. You Yangs had been barely finished in time; the bitumen was so freshly-laid that it was breaking up under the constant punishment. But the bigger problem was the layout of the track. It wasn't fit for purpose – which was to drive a team of five XP Falcons non-stop over nine days at an average speed of more than 110km/h. The track had been designed for vehicle testing at average speeds of barely half that speed.

"When I heard about it, I was horrified because I knew what the thing (the track) was like," said former Ford Australian marketing/sales executive, Keith Horner. "And it wasn't until we were too far committed that Bill Bourke came back from a trip to America and saw the test track. And boy, I tell you that if ever there was a worried man in Australia it was Bill Bourke.

"We had a couple of tall poppies visiting from US Ford product engineering and boy, they took care to get the hell out of the country on the Friday. They thought this was going to be the biggest disaster and that someone's neck was going on the block, and they made sure they were not going to be identified with it in any way."

Ford Australia's chief engineer, Jim Martin, apparently had privately given the run only about a 30 percent chance of success. And if it did go wrong, a huge media contingent was there to record every humiliating moment…

Happily, it all worked out in the end. But only just: at least three of the cars rolled during the proceedings. There was only one spare Falcon, and the CAMS rules stated that there had to be at least five cars on track at all times.

A multitude of drivers were used – basically any of the top aces of the day that were available were called upon. It turned out to be an experience like no other. Bob Jane declared it the 'hardest circuit on a car I've ever driven or even seen'; Valiant touring car racer Ern Abbott said: "It scared the living pants off me for the first 10 laps. You go up in the air and all you can see is the sky and suddenly someone takes the road from underneath you."

'Wild' Bill McLachlan described it as 'easily by far the toughest circuit I've driven on'. Which was saying something given McLachlan was a veteran of the gruelling 1950s Redex Round Australia trials era.

As Ford's team of mechanics worked feverishly to repair the damaged cars on the run to ensure there were five cars on track at all times, for a while it looked like the real problem would be keeping rubber under the Falcons. The new bitumen surface was so abrasive that it was shredding the tyres. The offside fronts were down to canvas after 160km. They were changing tyres every two hours.

By the end of the day one, Dunlop's man Ross Dodson told Ford's competition chief Powell he doubted there were enough tyres in the entire Melbourne area to finish the run!

So Bill Bourke made an emergency visit, sat down with Dodson in a tent and calculated exactly how many sets of tyres were available in all other states of Australia. He told Dodson to get every tyre he could find and air-freight them in. By Monday, every Dunlop SP/41 in Australia was headed in the direction of You Yangs!

There was a surreal moment when a helicopter appeared on the horizon and landed at the site. Out stepped none other than Henry Ford II; the top man himself on a brief visit to Australia. He'd heard about the run and demanded to see it for himself.

As another former Ford executive Max Grandsen put it: "He didn't have to stay long to come to the conclusion that we were out of our bloody minds, and he left no one in any doubt that he thought we were a bunch of damn fools!"

Still, among the chaos and dust, a significant moment was captured on film. As Henry Ford II inspected the proceedings, he was invited to meet some of the drivers. A man shown shaking hands with Ford was a young Allan Moffat, then virtually unknown.

Moffat smiled, stood a polite distance away from Mr Ford and bent forward at the waist to shake hands; the way you do when you greet royalty or the Pope. Who would have known that the young man would one day be Ford's Australian racing superstar?

XT Falcon

XW Falcon 500

Birth of the Aussie muscle car

The XR, Wally Booth said, was about finding the right competitor for the Holden. "We had to guess what the public wanted, which is sometimes different from what they say they want. We went for a larger car to match the standard of living. If it had not worked we would have been in deep financial stress; but within a month, dealers were screaming for cars – then we knew we had a winner."

William (Bill) Bourke

It looked like a winner, too. The XR's sleek 'Coke bottle' side profile was cutting-edge automotive styling in 1966 and made the angular HR Holden and slab-sided VC Valiant look like relics from the

The XR's sleek 'Coke bottle' side profile was cutting-edge automotive styling in 1966 and made the angular HR Holden and slab-sided VC Valiant look like relics from the past.

40·BFGT
XRGT·67
VICTORIA

XW Falcon GT

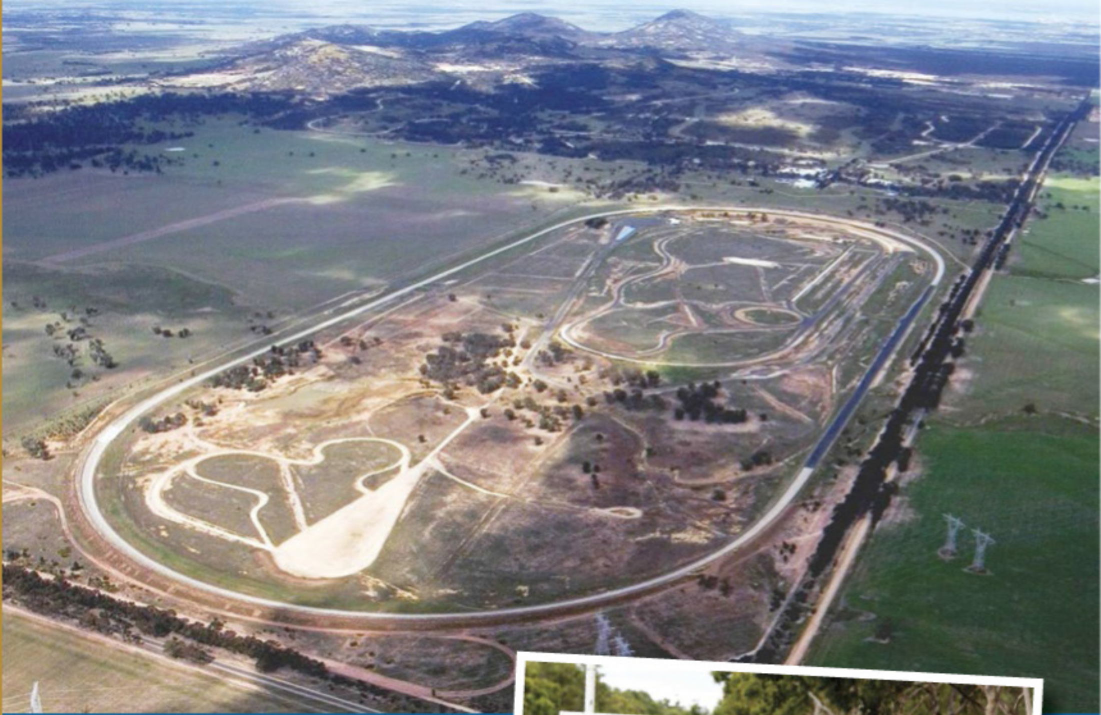
past. But not only was the new Falcon more modern looking than the Holden, it was also larger – and was available with V8 power.

Ford had known as early as late 1965 that Holden planned a V8 for its '68 HK range (although according to Ford's intelligence, it was the 300cid Buick V8, and not the 307/327cid Chev). Either way, with Chrysler already selling 318cid V8 Valiants, it was almost inevitable that the XR would have a V8 option. And in the case of the 289cid V8, Ford Australia was able to credibly market the new Falcon as 'Mustang bred'.

It was *Wheels* Car Of The Year in 1966 (it's no mean feat for a manufacturer to win the 'COTY' with two distinct models in consecutive years), and generally was a hit everywhere else as well. It was a winner on the track, too, with the Bill Bourke-inspired GT model.

The XR GT marked the birth of the Aussie muscle car. Holden had no choice but to respond in 1968 with the Monaro GTS 327, and there, that year at Mount Panorama, the battle between Holden and Ford on the track was joined.

The 1969 XW was based on the XR/XT – which, like the original XK Falcon, began life as an American design – but it was more than just a facelift. With a different roofline, recessed rear window, wrap around taillights, larger grille opening and the trademark big bumper bars, the XW was a more aggressive looking Falcon than its predecessors. That tough look that was



You Yangs

Ford Australia's 930-hectare You Yangs proving ground owes its existence to a failed Falcon ball joint. The front suspension ball joints in the XK Falcon were woefully inadequate. They cost the company a fortune in warranty claims, and far more in reputational damage for the new Falcon. Word of the problem got back to Henry Ford II, who sent an engineer out from Detroit to investigate. The engineer reported back that the component they were using in the Australian Falcon was simply not robust enough for the job. At the time Ford in the States had designed a larger ball joint for the upcoming 'Compact' Fairlane – it became the replacement part on the Falcon, and solved the problem. A little later during a visit to Australia, Henry Ford II asked Brian Inglis (then Ford Australia's manufacturing director) why the original ball joint hadn't been tested in Australia before being approved for manufacture. Inglis told him Ford Australia didn't have a test track. According to Inglis, Ford replied: "I will give you a test track, but never – *never* – come to me with a durability problem again."

Ford
FORD PROVING GROUND
Ford Motor Company of Australia Limited A.C.N. 004 116 223

XY Falcon GT-HO Phase III

XC Falcon Hardtops

matched by the performance of the sportier models, including of course the GTHO 'Bathurst' version that culminated in the iconic 1971 model XY GTHO Phase III.

By then Ford US had dropped the Falcon model. In its place were two new models: the smaller Maverick and larger Torino. Head office wanted Australia to take the Torino; new managing director Bill Bourke flatly refused; telling them it was too close in size to the Fairlane. The Australian design team did some

351-GT
GT
351

XA Fairmont

XB Falcon assembly

clay mockups of a Torino with shortened overhangs, but not even the Americans liked it. The Australian Torino idea was quietly parked. Instead, Bourke got approval for what would be the first all-Australian Falcon design, the XA.

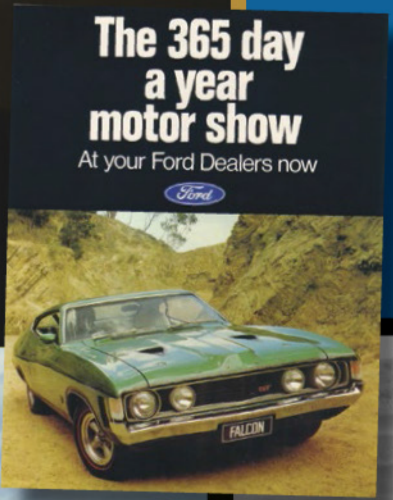
The all-Aussie XA

The XA was based on the XY chassis and mechanicals but pretty much everything else was new. There was, of course, a Hardtop version, for the first time since the XP. A two-door hadn't been part of the original XA brief in early 1968; it was added mainly due to concern about how much excitement had been generated by Holden's release of the HK Monaro.

The hard work of getting approval for a local design and then getting it done in record time paid off handsomely. The XA was a hit, and the Mustang-flavoured XB facelift carried the success forward until it culminated in the XC model, which in 1977 achieved the milestone of knocking Holden off the top of the national sales charts – for the first time since the late 1940s.

The new model Falcon for the '80s started life in 1974 almost as a response to the previous year's Oil Embargo. Suddenly 'gas guzzlers' were out of style. The proposed XD would be based on the running gear from the XC, but with a slimmed down (helped by the opening of Ford's plastics plant – the XD would, somewhat controversially, be the first Australian car to feature a plastic fuel tank), all-new square-edged shape.

It was a different road Ford was travelling from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Former leading Melbourne Holden dealer Bib Stillwell (at right) signs on with Ford, as part of Ford Australia's aggressive late '60s/early '70s push to poach Holden dealers. At left is Keith Horner, Ford's marketing manager and (at rear) regional manager Max Grandsden.

The dealer principle

The mid '60s Ford Australia hierarchy of Wally Booth as managing director and Bill Bourke as his assistant made for a formidable team. Among the big reforms they brought was an aggressive overhaul of the Ford dealer network. It was aggressive, because it entailed poaching some of the best salesmen from rival GM-H's dealer network – as future Ford Australia managing director Sir Brian Inglis explained in the Cook and Wallace book, *Ford Australia*:

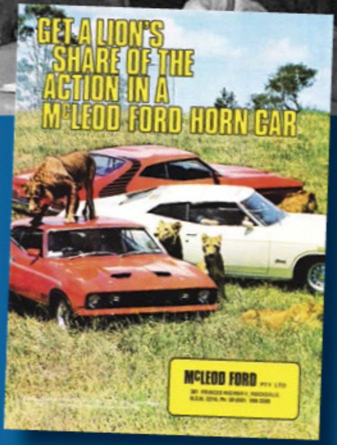
"Bourke said, 'We've got some very old dealers… and they aren't cutting the mustard. We have to get dealers strategically placed in the marketing areas.'

"He started a scheme where the Sales Planning people decided the best location. Then he went and bought the property. Then we'd build an appropriate facility with corporate colours, good signage, high visibility, a good workshop with parts and accessories and room for expansion. Then Bourke would look around for the right guy to run it. GM had lots of sales managers, people prepared to have a go. Bourke would ask them how much money have you got. They'd say, 'I haven't got much but I could raise $30,000 if I mortgage my home or something.' Bourke would tell them, 'do that, put the $30,000 down and this is your facility. You run it, you're the managing director, and we will finance you. Then we will sell it to you at our cost."

It worked a treat, because these were capable sales managers that now had skin in the game, with a financial stake in a Ford dealership business. Among the best and brightest from the Holden dealer network Ford poached during this period was a young Max McLeod, who went on to establish the powerhouse McLeod Ford business in Sydney.

Bourke's team also convinced Bib Stillwell to defect and drop his Holden dealership in favour of Ford. Losing a dealer of Stillwell's status, Inglis said, was a heavy psychological blow to GM-H.

"They could not believe their biggest dealer would turn on them like that… and, of course, we had other dealerships popping up all over the place, staffed by some of their best people. It was a rout!"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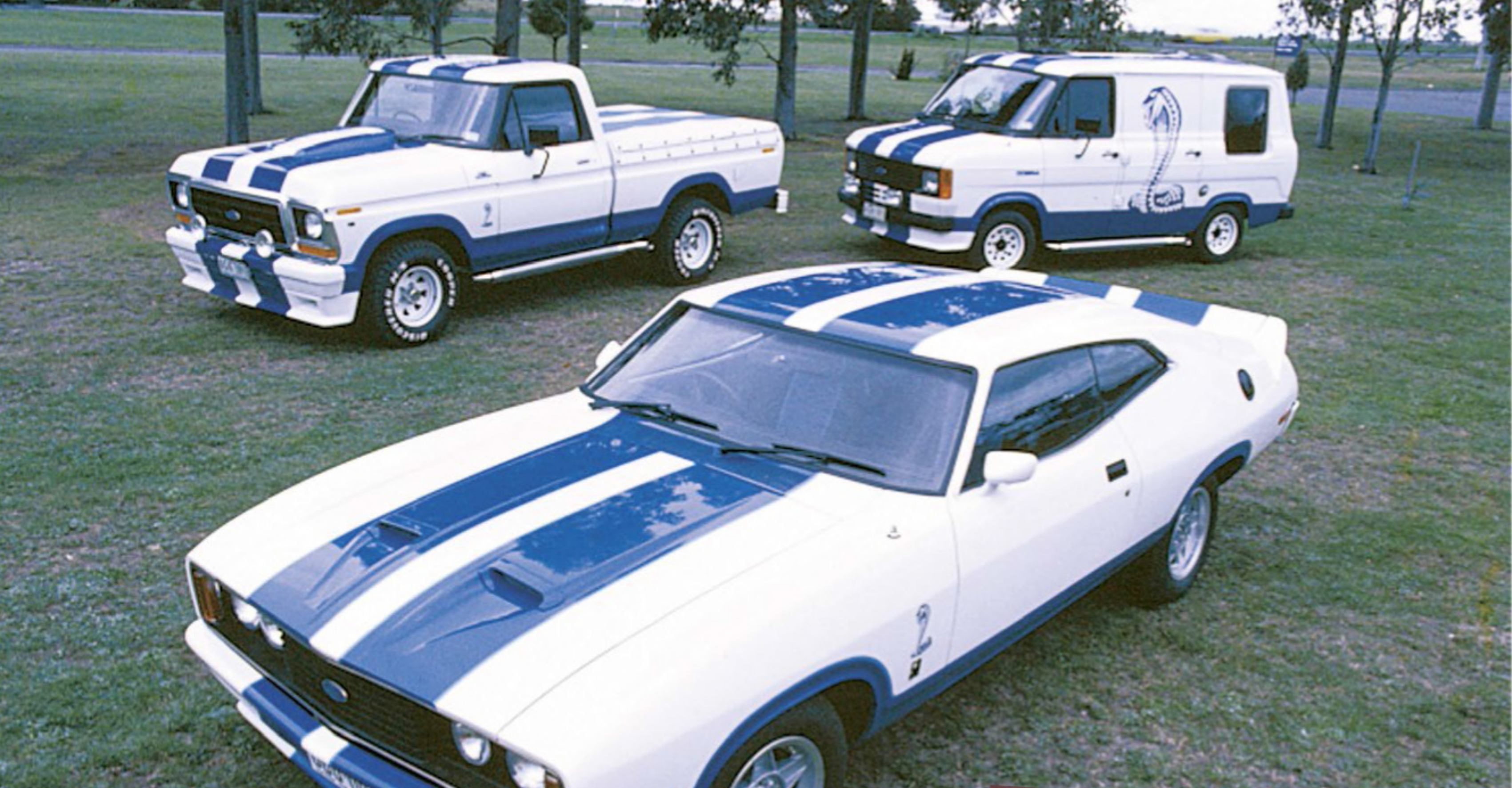
XB Falcons, with a Ford Cortina-engined Bowin Formula Ford racing car.



XC Cobra

Hardtop's starring role

The XA-B-C Falcon Hardtop today is an all-time classic. It's more than simply Aussie muscle car royalty, too, because its starring role as the 'Last of the V8 Interceptors' in the original, 1979, *Mad Max* movie exposed it to an international audience. As star cars go, it's hard to think of anything bigger in the entire history of the motion picture industry than the black XB Hardtop-based Mad Max 'Interceptor'. Maybe the 1970 Dodge Challenger in *Vanishing Point*, maybe Steve McQueen's '68 Mustang in *Bullitt*...

The Falcon Hardtop's movie role (a black 351 XA Hardtop also starred in the acclaimed 1999 Bryan Brown/Heath Ledger film *Two Hands*, as small-time villain/standover man Brown's personal ride) is part of the mystique of a six-year model run that had its highs and lows.

Almost immediately upon its release came the shock of the '73 oil crisis: suddenly the new two-door Ford seemed like the wrong car for the times. By the end of the Hardtop's life, Ford had to come up with clever marketing ploys such as the limited-edition Falcon Cobra just to be able to sell the things. The irony of that today, of course, is the stratospheric prices good Cobras – well, *any* Hardtops – are attracting.

In competition with Holden on the track from 1973 till the end of '79, there was plenty of success despite Ford itself being out of racing for most of that period. Two Bathurst wins for the XA, two ATCCs for the XB and the Moffat Ford Dealers XC Bathurst one-two was a decent haul. Like the movie Hardtops, the race cars looked the part (has there been a better-looking Aussie touring car than Moffat's '74 Brut 33 XB Hardtop GT?) even when they didn't win, running on fat rubber that nicely filled out those hefty rear wheel arches.

The Hardtop shape was actually designed to take wide rear tyres, which is why stock road versions always looked slightly odd with their skinny wheels. David Ford, an engineer on the XA design programme, told journalist Bill Tuckey that the big wheel arches were designed specifically with racing in mind: "The hardtop was partly driven by a sporty image… we wanted to go racing… we could make it more differentiated at the rear. We could get bigger wheels and tyres which Al Turner (the motorsport manager) was plumping – that's why it had such monstrous wheel arches, which looked pretty terrible with standard wheels and tyres on them."

Ford
ESP
The Spirit of Falcon
Flies Again

that which Holden had taken with its smaller, Opel-derived V-car (the VB Commodore), and so there was a lot at stake in 1979 when the XD was released.

Much of the motoring press predicted buyers would go for the smaller, and supposedly 'more advanced' Commodore; luckily for Ford the journos were wide of the mark as the stylish XD proved an instant hit.

The Falcon GT by then was a thing of the past (consigned to history with the XB); the closest thing to a GT for XD and XE buyers was the ESP. However, with its modest 'European Sports Pack' styling, it was a GT neither in name nor substance. And with the XE, it presided over what not many years earlier had seemed unthinkable: the axing of the 302/351 V8 engine.

It's true that there was not a 'GT' type Holden at the time, but there was a V8 option – and the range of hot HDT/Brock Commodores which were a spinoff of the Peter Brock-led racing effort. Ford might have been giving Dick Johnson a bit of help, but it wasn't really going motor racing – at least not in the boots-and-all way Holden was.

That all changed into the 1990s. The '91 EB Falcon upgrade on the all-new EA introduced to replace the XD-E-F series in 1988 (featuring

Top: The ESP (European Sports Pack) was the closest thing to a GT in the Falcon range during the XD-XE era. It was also the last local Ford with the 351 Cleveland V8.

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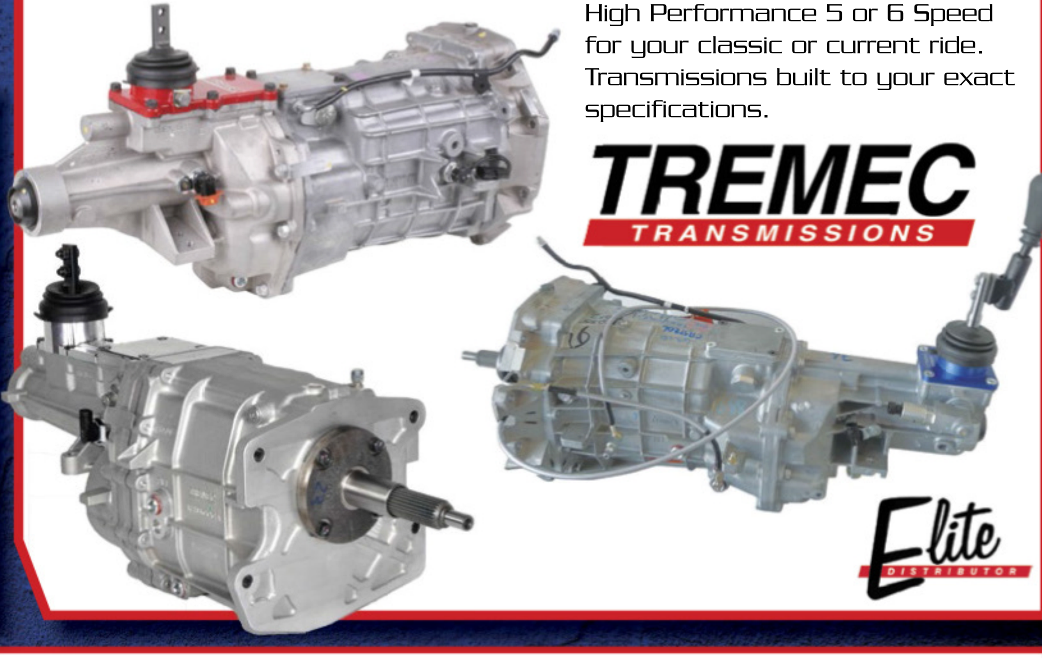

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ED Falcon XR8 Sprint

EL Falcon GT

new overhead cam six-cylinder engines), saw the reintroduction of the Windsor 5.0-litre V8. Then, in 1992, came the return of the Falcon GT, if only as a limited-edition run of 250 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the first original Falcon. If you weren't able to snap up a GT, then there was the XR8, which made its debut in the EB series.

The GT and XR8 (and XR6) represented a promising first step out of the darkness of the '80s as Ford seemed to be rediscovering Falcon's high performance past and the lofty place it occupies in the history of the Aussie muscle car. It also coincided neatly with the Falcon's return to touring racing, with the 1992/93 advent of what later would be called Supercars.

Five years on from the EB GT came the 30th anniversary EL Falcon GT model at the end of the EA-series. It was a fitting end to 10-year EA-EL era that had seen Ford mostly retain its marketplace ascendancy – although now with Toyota as its rival. But the trajectory took an about turn with the 1998 release of the AU Falcon.

The AU setback

The AU might be the least-loved of all Falcon models but it could have been worse – for a while the American front-drive Taurus was being seriously evaluated as the EL's replacement.

The AU's many technical innovations made it a

FPV GT-P
FPV
GT-P
Ford

significantly better car than the EL. The only thing wrong with it, really, was the way it looked – and it didn't help that opposite number Holden's new Commodore was the classically handsome VT.

Geoff Polites had taken over as Ford Australia chief in 1999. He'd joined Ford in the beginning in 1970 as a product planner under Bill Bourke, but later was head-hunted to run City Ford – eschewing the option of promotion within Ford senior management because it would have entailed relocating his family overseas.

Polites was brought back into the fold by former Ford colleague and fellow Australian Jac Nasser, who by then was CEO of the Ford empire. Polites answered Nasser's call to restore the Australian arm's flagging fortunes.

AU Falcon XR6 and Futura
FALCON XR6
FALCON FUTURA

Above top left: V8 power would return to the Ford range in the 1990s but back in 1982 this Fairmont Ghia ESP was the last Australian-made Ford with a V8 engine - we're not sure why everyone is celebrating…
Right: The late Geoff Polites and the 'Barra' BA Falcon which turned Ford Australia's fortunes around after the debacle of the unloved AU model.

Ford
FALCON JOB # 1 BARRA
SEPTEMBER, 2002
BROADMEADOWS ASSEMBLY PLANT
Polities with Barra Job #1

Craig Lowndes with Ford Australia boss Geoff Polites and Fred Gibson.

He was the right man for the job, a passionate enthusiast with the courage of his convictions. Polites introduced the 'AU-fix' BA model in 2002 (the BA became the first Falcon to win *Wheels* COTY since the XR), with a largely new engine range that included the unique 5.4-litre Boss V8, a turbocharged version of the new twin-cam six and, in 2004, the Territory SUV.

He also increased Ford's motorsport involvement – which included the poaching of Holden's top star, Craig Lowndes. With the return of Howard Marsden as Ford's competition chief, and successes in the ATCC and, finally in 2006 at Bathurst with Lowndes and then relative newcomer Jamie Whincup, Polites helped orchestrate a renaissance for Ford both on and off the track.

He also reorganised the special vehicles operation, replacing Tickford (which hitherto

had struggled to lay a glove on rival HSV) with Ford Performance Vehicles (with a FPR V8 Supercars off-shoot) in partnership with Prodrive. This included the permanent return of the Falcon GT as flagship of the FPV range.

In 2008 came the stylish and perhaps the best Falcon model, the FG (based on the BA/BF platform), and with it the 5.0-litre 'Miami' quad-cam alloy V8.

Two years on and the Falcon model turned 50 years old. It was a milestone that wasn't met with widespread celebrations, however, because even by then the writing was on the wall. The sad irony was that, just the like the VE Commodore, this latest, locally-designed and built Falcon truly was a world class car, and yet Australian buyers increasingly were turning away from it. There was a range of factors – such as the loss of lucrative export markets, the manufacturer and model fragmentation of the local market, the shift among family car buyers to SUVs – but in the end the decision by Ford Australia chief Bob Graziano in 2013 to cease local manufacture had been coming for some time.

For fans of Ford muscle, the Falcon GT at least was able to bow out on a thumping high with a series of limited-edition, collectable GTs, culminating in 2014 in the GT-F '351'. If the XY GTHO Phase III was the fastest mass-produced four-door production car in the world in 1971, then in mid-2010 it was hard to think of anything else under $100,000 that could match the performance offered by the GT-F –

FG Falcon XR8 and XR6

FPV GT-F

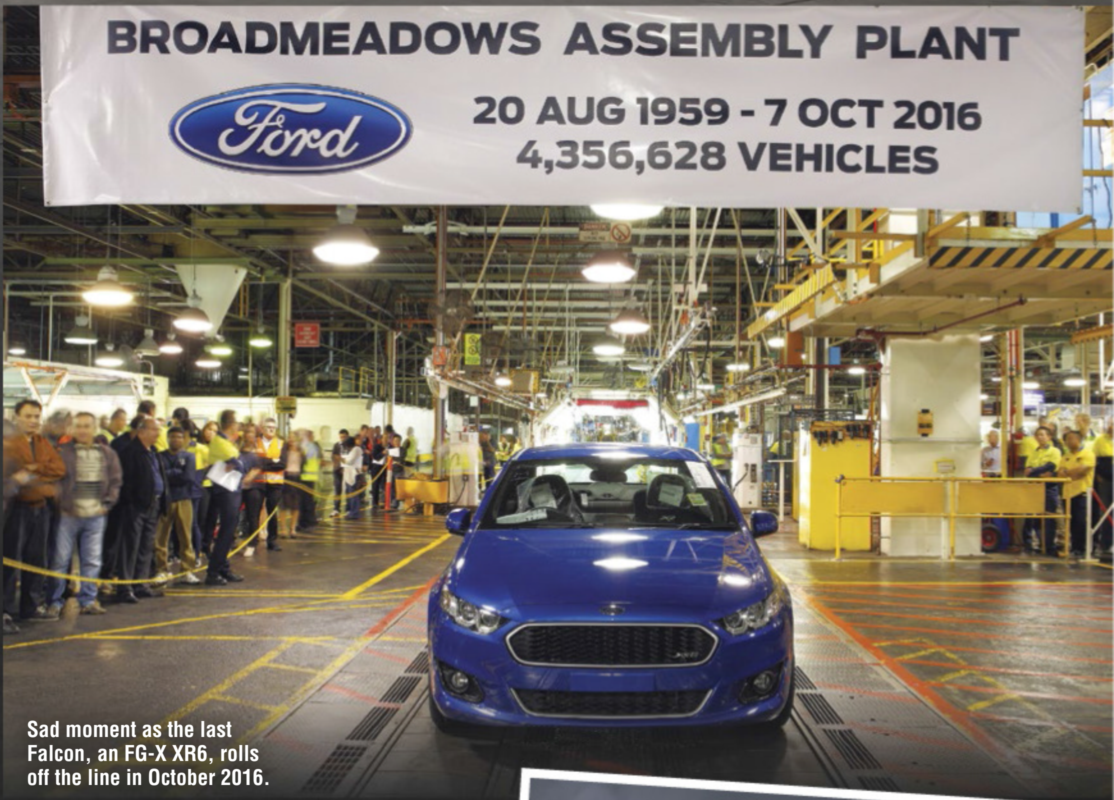
except maybe its opposite number at HSV.

Of course, the end of local Ford manufacture in 2016 wasn't the end. While today Ford, like all other car brands in this country, might only be an importer, the Blue Oval has been blessing us with the Mustang since 2018. And with the Ponycar as its performance flagship, Ford Australia's commitment to high performance and motorsport is arguably as strong as it's ever been.

For many of the people who played a role in shaping Ford Australia over the 100-year journey, today's Ford range would probably be unrecognisable. It's a very different scene in Ford dealer showrooms today from when the last Falcons rolled off the line in July, 2016.

The Mustang is the only conventional car in the 2025 lineup; the biggest selling Ford vehicle in Australia is a dual-cab light truck.

It's not made here but the Ranger has its roots in Australia, and more specifically at Ford's Victorian facilities at Broadmeadows and You Yangs, where much of the design and development of the current model took place. The foundations laid 100 years ago by Hubert French on behalf of Ford's Canadian division remain solid today.



Sad moment as the last Falcon, an FG-X XR6, rolls off the line in October 2016.

AMC would like to thank Phil Grant and Chris Retzos for providing the Ford muscle that features in our cover story photo shoot, to Ross Vasse for helping organise it and to the Museum of Vehicle Evolution (MOVE) at Shepparton for providing the venue.

Ford Mustang R-Spec

From road to track

We could fill an entire issue of AMC with Ford's Australian on-track racing highlights. Instead, here's a sample handful of some of the more memorable moments in competition for the Blue Oval.

Cortina GT

It's maybe not what you'd call a muscle car but the 1963 Cortina GT is a highly significant model in the history of Aussie Ford muscle. It was the first Bathurst homologation special, so in that sense it was the forerunner to the Falcon XR GT. The Cortina's Bathurst win that year was just one component of a highly successful exercise, because not only was Ford able to get away with (via the cunning genius of Harry Firth) fielding what was really a Bathurst hotrod, the finger of suspicion ended up being pointed in the direction of the opposition, namely Holden, with its new EH S4 'sports car' (resulting in considerable embarrassment and distress behind closed doors at Fishermans Bend). As the race showed, the Cortina GT was far more of a 'sports car' than the S4, and possibly even rarer, too. Reports in the days after the race confirmed you couldn't buy a new GT from your local Ford dealer for love or money.

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The old 1-2

With renewed support from Ford after a few years on the sidelines for the Blue Oval, Allan Moffat embarked on what would be a season of near-complete Ford supremacy. Running a second Falcon XB GT for HDT's former number one ace, Colin Bond, the Moffat team dominated the Australian Touring Car Championship, and then at Bathurst (with the newer spec XC model), they did a job on Holden's much vaunted new Torana A9X. It ended in that iconic '1-2 Form Finish' for the two Moffat Ford Dealers Hardtops, with not a single Torana in sight. The striking aerial helicopter footage of the two cars cruising down Conrod for the final time capped it off. It doesn't get any better than this, as they say, and it was certainly true in this case: although in October '77 no one could have predicted how quickly it would all unravel. Little more than a year on, the Ford/Moffat racing partnership was over – for good.

One.Two.Thank you!
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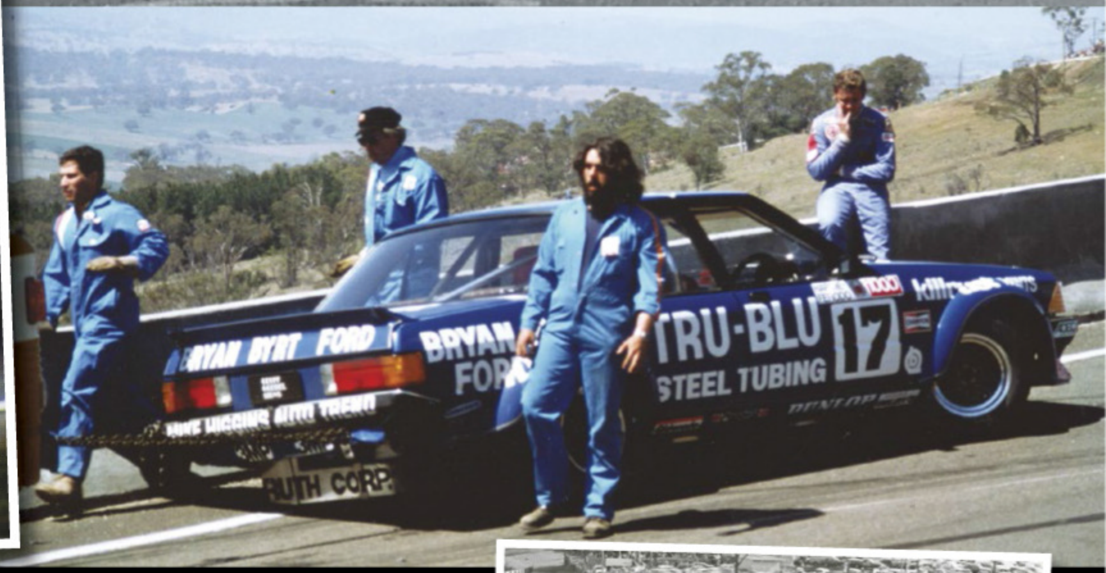
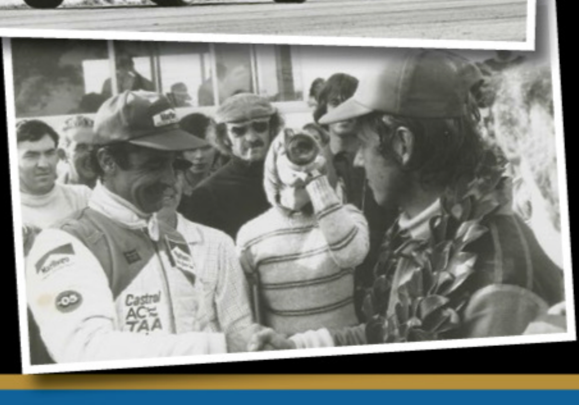


Dick hits the rock

It should have been the end of Dick Johnson's career; instead, it was just the beginning. Would he and John French have won the 1980 Hardie-Ferodo 1000 had Dick's XD Falcon not hit the rock? Who knows… But the public outpouring of support for the struggling Queenslander that followed – with a pledge from Edsel Ford II that Ford would match it dollar for dollar – gave Johnson the wherewithal to go motor racing properly. He did not waste what was literally a golden opportunity, banging on five ATCC titles before the decade was through, and cementing his position as the new Ford hero, replacing Moffat almost instantly. Forty-five years later and Dick Johnson Racing remains a Ford powerhouse team in Australian touring car racing – and just this year was announced as the newest 'Spirit of Ford' honouree, which is Ford Motorsport's highest honour.

Brock vs Johnson at Lakeside

Dick Johnson's Phoenix-like rise from the ashes of his failed 1980 Bathurst bid saw him prevail in the '81 ATCC over Peter Brock. It was a fairytale result that could hardly have ended in finer style for Johnson, with the championship being decided on his home track, Lakeside. In an epic winner-take-all encounter to rival the Jane-vs-Moffat Oran Park decider of exactly 10 years' previous, Johnson somehow held out Brock for the entire race. It wasn't easy – and not just because his opponent was Brock; the Tru-Blu XD Falcon had broken a sway bar early on but, willed on by the packed, partisan Queensland crowd, Dick resisted everything Brock threw at him. Afterwards Johnson praised his rival; for they never rubbed a single panel. Dick noted that Brock could have nudged the ill-handling Falcon off the track at any moment, but was instead honourable in defeat.



START
WINTON
Shell
JOHN BOWE
HOLDEN
Peter Jackson
30
Shell
DUNLOP
Ford Dealers
FALCON
INGERSOLL-RAND

Ray Berghouse

Young Glenn

What we call Supercars racing today started with the '5-litre V8' formula in 1993. It marked the return to racing of the Falcon model after an eight-year absence from Bathurst and the ATCC, and though there were just the two Ford teams against an armada of VP Commodores, the Falcons prevailed in the ATCC. Glenn Seton not only got in early by running his Falcon in the '92 endurance races (happily washing his hands of the difficult turbo Sierra RS500), but his team had also done most of the homologation hard yards on the EB Falcon (a role DJR unwittingly excluded itself from by opting for a much more modified concept with its proposed EB racer – which motorsport's authorities promptly knocked back). Seton was the class of the field that year and took a deserved championship win – the first of his two ATCC wins with Ford, and the first Falcon winner since Johnson's XE triumph in '84.

Greens (trees) Tuf

The idea of doing a banzai one-lap shootout to set the top 10 grid spots for a 1000km race is, on the face of it, downright crazy. If you're starting in the top 10, why risk hanging it off the fence with the race less than a day away, for the sake of starting a few rows closer to the front? Why, indeed… Because just as this pursuit of pure, ultimate Mount Panorama pace has given us moments like Greg Murphy's Lap of the Gods, on the other side of the coin there is Dick Johnson's through-the-trees '83 wipeout. Yes, Dick started the race in a 'new' Falcon, in a complex car swap deal, but the makeshift effort was never likely to yield a result – and it didn't. In the end, Johnson and Kevin Bartlett would have been better off sitting out the shootout and then starting an undamaged car from the outside of row five.

The Super Falcons

Oddly, the works-built 'Super Falcons' Improved Production cars created especially for Allan Moffat and Ian Geoghegan to race in the Australian Touring Car Championship have achieved legend status among Ford fans despite the fact that the cars were, by any measure, failures. It would have been really something to see Moffat and Geoghegan in their 'super' GTHOs taking on Norm Beechey's HT Monaro GTS 350 and Bob Jane's Camaro, but the Super Falcons were so fundamentally flawed that Moffat never even raced his. The problem was that Ford motorsport chief Al Turner had placed too much emphasis on horsepower and not enough on handling (Big Al came to Australia with an extensive history in drag racing) – the cars were fast on the straights but less so over a lap, and were generally a handful to manage. So delayed were they in getting onto the track that what started out as XWs were updated to XYs – Geoghegan did go on to race his, and managed to get the thing handling sweetly with help from John Joyce, constructor of Bowin openwheeler racing cars. He even won an ATCC round in his car – in that memorable 1972 Easter Bathurst clash against Moffat's Mustang.

17
Motorcraft

'Our TAA'
XMO
DUNLOP

Ray Berghouse

The Frankenstang

Yes, it's… well, it doesn't look good, it doesn't really look like a Mustang should. But it's what had to be done to get a Mustang on the grid in Supercars racing during the previous, post-Falcon Gen2 era. The original Supercars Mustang created a minor media furore when it first broke cover; afterwards it was a either case of averting one's eyes from the distorted 'Stang' racer, or simply ignore it and remind one's self of the irony of this genuine (and iconic) muscle car competing against opposition that was rather far more removed from Supercars' rear-drive 5.0-litre V8 format, at least in road car form, with the Commodore ZB and Nissan Altima each being six-cylinder, front-wheel-drive sedans. Not that Ford itself seemed to mind – in drag racing in the States Ford Motorsport was happily backing a Mustang Funny Car that looked far less like an S550 road car even than Scott McLaughlin's DJR/Shell Mustang. Indeed, the entire Gen2 Supercars Mustang was created by Ford's motorsport operation in the US – and that makes it as legitimate a Ford competition car as perhaps anything that came before it in Australian touring car racing.

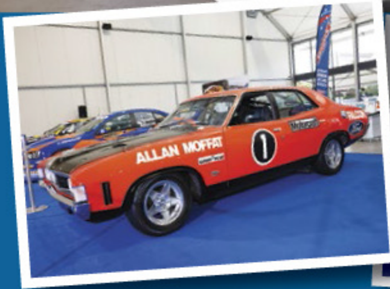
McLeod Ford Falcon Lightweight

It is hard to believe today, but back in 1972-73, Sports Sedans were arguably Australia's most popular touring car category. They were quicker than the Series Production cars, and quicker than the Group C cars from 1973 on – as well as being louder, and generally more spectacular. Possibly one of the best was John Goss' Lightweight XA Sports Sedan. It wasn't much more than a hollowed-out Group C Hardtop GT with wider rubber and more grunt, but in Gossy's hands it was a wild, sideways beast of a thing – and the fans loved it. What made it so good was its simplicity. Its lack of sophistication – in stark contrast to the complex, Formula 5000-inspired machines like John McCormack's mid-engined Valiant Charger and Bryan Thomson's VW-Chev that arrived in 1974 to take Gossy on – was in fact a virtue. Hindsight's a wonderful thing, but had Gossy's simple lightweight Falcon been the blueprint for the future of Sports Sedans, rather than the high-tech 'almost anything goes' machines that define the category today, it might still be our top touring car category.

Mostert at Bathurst 2014-15

Chaz Mostert's 2014 Bathurst win alongside Paul Morris was among the most bizarre victories ever on the Mountain. And not just because of that final-lap duel with Jamie Whincup, who sowed the seeds of his own defeat by ignoring team requests to save fuel. Mostert and Morris won it from the rear of the grid, and after Morris had crashed the car into the tyre barriers at Griffin's Bend. They were perhaps saved by the other bizarre event on the day; namely, the lengthy mid-race pause while the track surface was repaired, but even then they made more pitstops than the cars they beat. It was a race that couldn't have been scripted. Likewise, what happened 12 months later, when Mostert had that monster crash down towards Forrest's Elbow in qualifying. Sustaining some nasty leg injuries, Mostert spent the 2015 race in Bathurst hospital and the rest of the season on the sidelines. The mangled wreckage of Mostert's FPR Falcon FG from that crash is on permanent display at the National Motor Racing Museum.

Clay Cross



100 candles

Ford didn't let the occasion of the 100th year of its Australian operations slip, throwing itself a big party in Melbourne to celebrate. Here's a snapshot of the event, attended by executive chairman of the Ford Motor Company, and great-grandson of Henry Ford himself, Bill Ford. **Images:** Ford Australia, Ray Berghouse

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

MOFFAT FORD DEALERS
2
BP

Ford 100 YEARS
killrust
TRU-BLU
a real steel
TRU-BLU
17
STEEL TUBING

Ford

Hardtops' happy anniversary

SHANNONS
Falcon
SXB·302

Just a few weeks before Ford celebrated its 100th year in Australia with a lavish event in Melbourne, just across Bass Strait there was another Ford celebration with the 2025 running of the biannual Hardtop Anniversary.

Story: Jon Chandler **Images:** Doc Baldwin, Dean Weeks

PENRITE
SHANNONS
JGS·302
XB·500
Falcon

This year's Hardtop Anniversary was always going to be more than just a gathering – it was a celebration of more than 50 years of hardtop Falcons, and 100 years of Ford Australia.

Previous gatherings averaged around 100 entrants, but this year's event attracted a total of 186 hardtops from all corners of the country – there was even an entrant from Texas!

On the Friday, early arrivals were treated to exclusive discounts at event sponsor Autobarn Devonport, along with a tour of a private car collection that boasted more than 200 vehicles – from Ferrari F40s to Edsel Fords and GT40s. When the Spirit of Tasmania finally arrived, mainland entrants cruised Tasmania's famed Targa roads through the breathtaking highlands to the picturesque Great Lake Hotel for lunch, before proceeding to Hobart's Wrest Point Casino, the event's central hub.

With reserved undercover parking ensuring the hardtops' security overnight, the meet-and-greet on Friday evening offered attendees their entrant bags packed with goodies, a bottle of event wine, and plenty of opportunities to bond over their shared passion.

In one shape but all colours… Nearly 200 hardtops descended on the Apple Isle for this year's Hardtop Anniversay event.

Saturday: boiled lollies and legendary drivers

Hobart buzzed with excitement as the second day of the 2025 Hardtop Anniversary took off in spectacular fashion. On Saturday, March 22, the city's iconic Parliament Lawns at Salamanca transformed into a vibrant showcase of Ford Falcon XA, XB, XC, and Landau hardtops. Coinciding with the Salamanca Market – the southern hemisphere's largest outdoor market, with over 25,000 visitors – the event painted a dazzling picture of Australia's motoring history.

Volunteers from the Classic Ford Club meticulously planned the parking arrangement, ensuring every inch of the lawns was filled with gleaming hardtops. A young spectator, marvelling at the riot of colours, declared, "It looks like somebody spilled a jar of boiled lollies!" It was a sentiment that echoed throughout the crowd as people admired the dazzling array of 1970s Ford Aussie muscle icons in all its glory.

Entrants mingled with market visitors, enjoying local crafts, food, and the atmosphere of the show and shine. It was a day for appreciation – not just of the cars, but also of the culture and community they represent.

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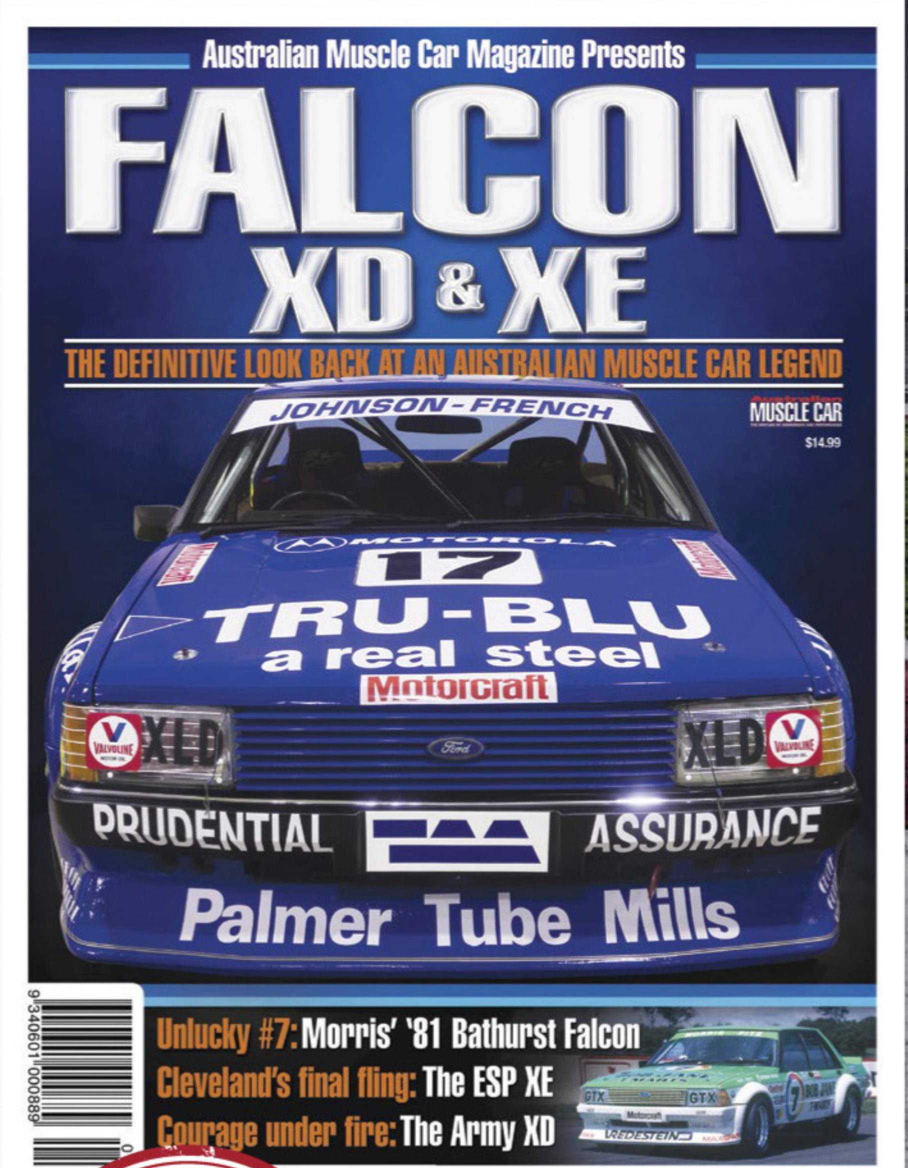

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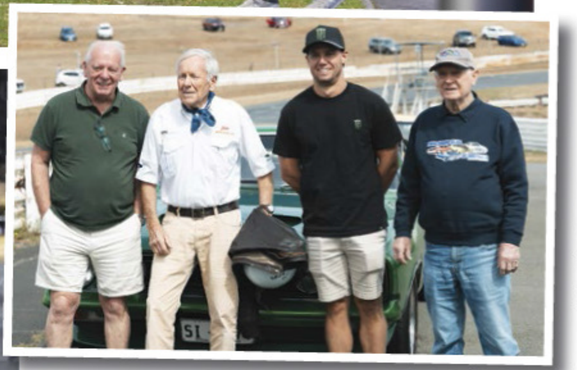
Falcon royalty... John Goss was there, along with fellow 1970s Falcon Hardtop racers Jim Keogh and Murray Carter, plus current Tickford Mustang driver Cam Waters, owner of a nicey tricked out Hardtop road car.



Ford motorsport royalty in attendance

Saturday marked the first appearance of the event's special guests: former Falcon Hardtop Bathurst winner John Goss, current Tickford Mustang Supercars driver Cam Waters, 1970s hardtop racer Jim Keogh, and hardtop Falcon stalwart Murray Carter. Fans lined up to purchase event merchandise and have their posters signed, while Goss spent time chatting with attendees, signing John Goss Special Falcons, and reliving the origins of his racing career. After all, Gossy grew up on Tasmanian soil and started his racing career here. His heartfelt stories, shared from the steps of Parliament House, captivated the crowd, adding a nostalgic layer to the day.

As the car show wrapped up, some attendees headed to Tilford Ford for a VIP meet-and-greet, where Goss reminisced about his apprenticeship at Tilford Motors. Others took advantage of the sunny afternoon, cruising up Mt Wellington, or winding through the idyllic Huon Valley. These drives highlighted the timeless appeal of hardtop Falcons on Tasmania's picturesque roads.

By evening, the focus shifted to Willie Smith's Apple Shed for a night of exceptional food, lively entertainment, and unforgettable companionship. Attendees opted for the convenience of buses, ensuring they could fully immerse themselves in the festivities. The atmosphere was electric, with massive platters of locally-sourced Huon Valley delicacies setting the stage for a feast, followed by delicious mains that left everyone satisfied.

Special guest Barry Oliver, a seasoned navigator with an impressive Targa Tasmania and tarmac rally record, and undoubtedly one of Australian motorsport's best ever course commentators, shared his storied career in an engaging interview conducted by Tickford Racing's CEO, Simon Brookhouse. The tables turned as Oliver interviewed Brookhouse, offering insights into the inner workings of Tickford Racing and the V8 Supercars.

The evening peaked with the appearance of Tickford Racing's star driver – and hardtop owner and enthusiast – Cam Waters. Cam's anecdotes, coupled with lively discussions about racing, left attendees with an interesting and entertaining talk.

As the night wound down, attendees climbed aboard the buses for their return to Wrest Point, their laughter and stories echoing through the night. The 2025 Hardtop Anniversary's second day was a resounding success, blending the joy of motoring with the deep connections of a passionate community.

Sunday: motorsports action, scenic cruises and gala glamour

The third day of the 2025 Hardtop Anniversary delivered high-octane thrills, stunning Tasmanian vistas, and a celebration of brotherhood that defines this incredible event. From heart-pounding motorsports at

Baskerville Raceway to picturesque drives through the Coal River Valley, Sunday was packed with unforgettable experiences for hardtop owners.

One group of hardtop owners kicked off the day with a cruise to Baskerville Raceway, the oldest continually running racetrack in Australia. After navigating the paperwork and driver's briefing, entrants were on the track, guided by a pace car to get a feel for its tight, technical layout. Once the pace car peeled away, the true fun began – lapping the historic circuit at speed.

Next, drivers tackled timed hillclimb sprints, where skill and setup were just as critical as raw horsepower. Roll racing on the back straight followed, pushing both cars and drivers to their limits. The day took an exciting turn when members of Tasmania Police Highway Patrol arrived in their newest BMW Highway Patrol car to introduce the state's first 'You Vs The Blue' event. This friendly competition, inspired by the successful 'Beat the Blue' in NSW, saw officers pitted against the hardtops in a hillclimb sprint. The crowd loved every second, and while the 'Blue' took the win, the hardtops put up an impressive fight. It was a thrilling, collaborative effort that highlighted the spirit of motorsport.

Meanwhile, the second group of entrants embarked on a leisurely cruise through the world-famous Coal River Valley. The route included a stop at the historic town of Richmond, where they admired Australia's oldest stone span bridge, and a visit to Riversdale Estate, owned by 16-time Targa Tasmania competitor Ian Roberts. His participation in the event with a genuine XC Cobra only added to the allure.

At noon, the Coal River Valley group joined their fellow entrants at Baskerville Raceway. All attendees gathered on the infield for lunch and a warm welcome from Nick Duigan, Tasmania's Minister for Sports and Events. It was a moment to connect and celebrate the event's incredible turnout.

Legends on the track

The day's highlight came when John Goss, Jim Keogh, Cam Waters, and Murray Carter hopped into some iconic hardtops to do parade laps around the circuit. Goss, driving a 500hp John Goss Special, stole the show with his blistering pace. His thrilling performance

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had the crowd on their feet, and his praise for the car's handling and power added even more excitement to the occasion.

What followed was a historic sight: every hardtop in attendance took to the track, parking three-wide for a breathtaking display. The kaleidoscope of colours and roaring engines was a moment to remember and captured the essence of the Hardtop Anniversary.

As the sun set, over 400 attendees gathered at Wrest Point's Tasman Ballroom for the gala dinner. The venue's stage featured Tony Fraser's immaculate 1975 Landau, Jon Chandler's 1975 John Goss Special, and a brand-new 2025 Mustang supplied by Tilford Ford – a fitting tribute to 50 years of Falcon hardtops and Ford Australia's 100-year milestone.

With a dress code of smart casual or 1970s-themed attire, attendees embraced the opportunity to don groovy outfits, adding flair to the evening. The night's entertainment was led by emcee John Hoskins and interviews conducted by Barry Oliver. Racing legends Goss and Keogh shared hilarious banter, with the latter cheekily invoicing the 1974 Bathurst winner for a set of magnesium racing wheels borrowed decades ago!

Cam Waters joined the stage to discuss building his own XB hardtop and racing Mustangs today. Cam then bantered with Simon Brookhouse about negotiating his future with Tickford Racing and his 'expensive' new contract.

The evening concluded with awards for outstanding cars, from best XA to best Landau, and a charity auction. The auction items included hot laps with Cam Waters and dinner with Tickford Racing's team, with proceeds benefiting Variety Tasmania.

From motorsport thrills to scenic cruises and a glamorous celebration of car culture, Sunday epitomised the passion, community, and heritage of the Hardtop Anniversary. It was a day – and night – that attendees will cherish for years to come.

Monday's bonus cruise: the perfect finish

As the 2025 Hardtop Anniversary reached its conclusion on the Monday, it offered one final adventure for entrants. A 'bonus day' of scenic drives, and a trip to the Symmons Plains circuit.

Entrants began their journey early, with many opting for the picturesque route to Symmons Plains via Tasmania's stunning east coast. The drive along the Lake Leake Highway, known for its sweeping bends and gorgeous scenery, provided an unparalleled experience for both drivers and passengers.

At Symmons Plains Raceway, history came alive as hardtop Falcons hit the track. The excitement was palpable as the hardtops glided through the corners and onto the straights. A group photo on the starting grid captured this iconic moment, preserving the spirit of the event for years to come.

From Symmons Plains, the convoy continued to the National Automobile Museum of Tasmania, where the history of Australian motoring was celebrated. Stops at ACL Bearings and other local sponsors and landmarks rounded out the day, showcasing the Tasmanian community's connection to the nation's automotive legacy.

This year's Hardtop Anniversary was not only the largest in history, with 186 entries, but also a significant contributor to Tasmania's economy, generating approximately $1.5 million in revenue. Even the weather seemed to cooperate, with perfect conditions shining on both the cars and the countless friendships forged over the weekend.

As the cars queued up for the Spirit of Tasmania night sailing, there was a sense of gratitude and accomplishment in the air. Families, friends, and enthusiasts reflected on an event that had seamlessly blended the past, present, and future of motoring culture. The 2025 Hardtop Anniversary wasn't just a celebration of cars; it was a celebration of community, passion, and the enduring legacy of Ford Australia.

Supported by a community of sponsors

This extraordinary event was made possible by an impressive array of sponsors, including naming rights sponsor Recycal, Events Tasmania, Tickford Racing, Shannons Insurance, Autobarn, eBay, Rare Spares, Wrest Point Casino, Hobart City Council and many more. Their contributions ensured the Hardtop Anniversary delivered unforgettable experiences for all.

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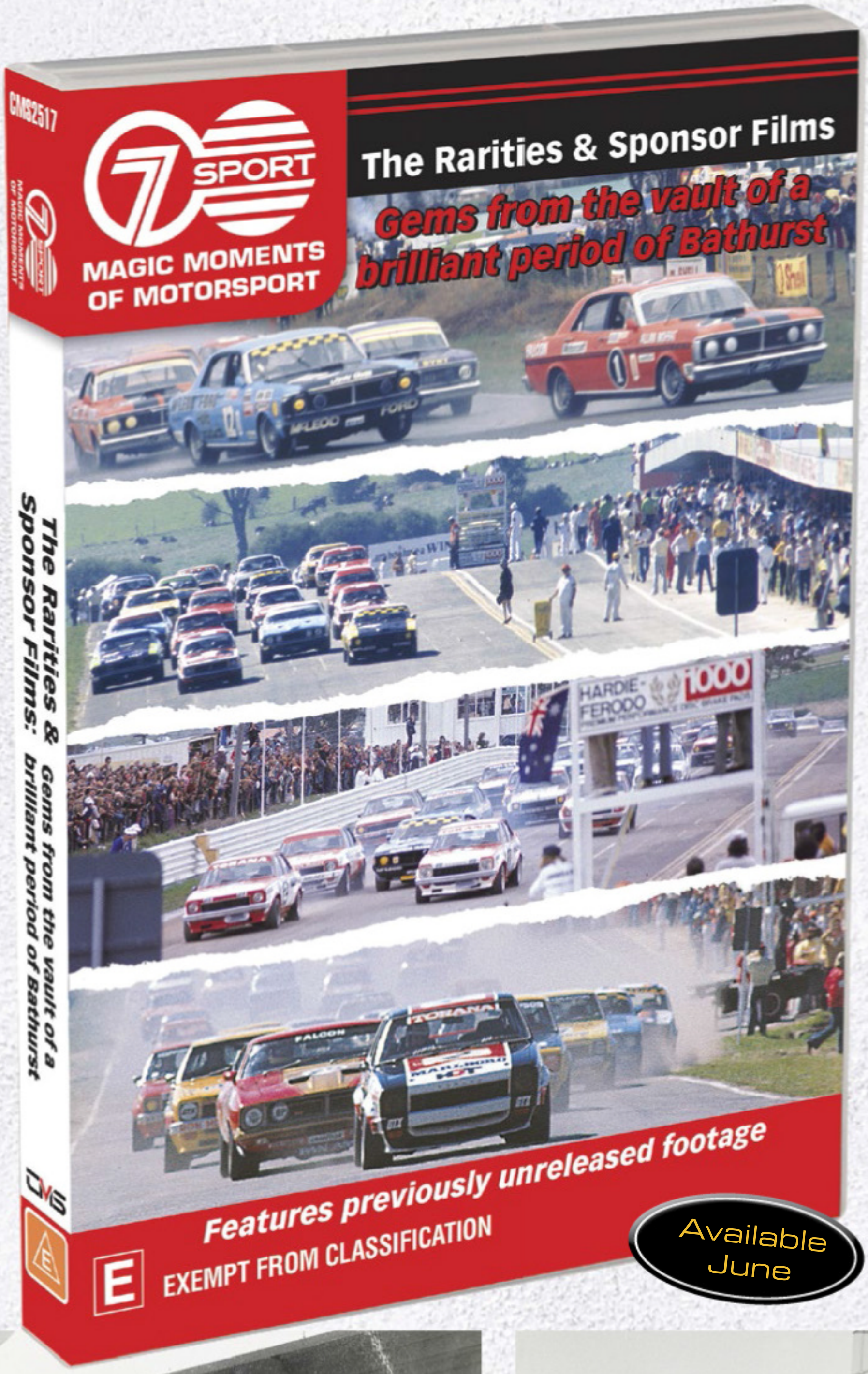
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The Rarities & Sponsor Films: Gems from the vault of a brilliant period of Bathurst
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The Rarities & Sponsor Films

Bathurst is the biggest race in Australian motorsport and its rise and growth to national prominence through the 1970s was largely via the expansive and dedicated television coverage of the Seven Network. But the TV cameras weren't the only ones running at Mount Panorama in this period of the race's history. A range of sponsors funded feature documentaries on the goings on at Bathurst each year, covering the highs and the lows of the various races.

This was the era where Peter Brock and Allan Moffat were becoming household names and the on-track success of a car model instantly was transferred into what sat in the driveways of families across the country.

On this special release we have four rare sponsor films from the 1970s covering the years from 1972 – Peter Brock's first Bathurst win for the Holden Dealer Team – through to his second victory in 1975.

In between are wins by the factory Ford of Allan Moffat in 1973 and the privateer entry of John Goss' team in 1974.

These films aren't 100 percent in terms of quality and clarity, however they are absolute gems that are a must for every motor racing DVD collection.

This title was previously only available in the box set 'Living In The 70s" .

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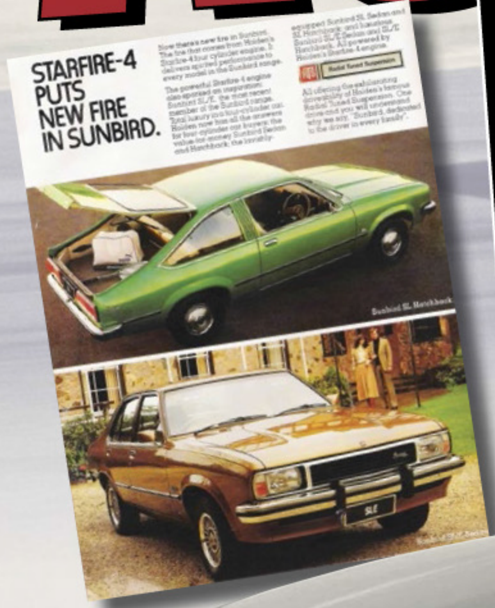
A9X UC?



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Sunbird SL Hatchback

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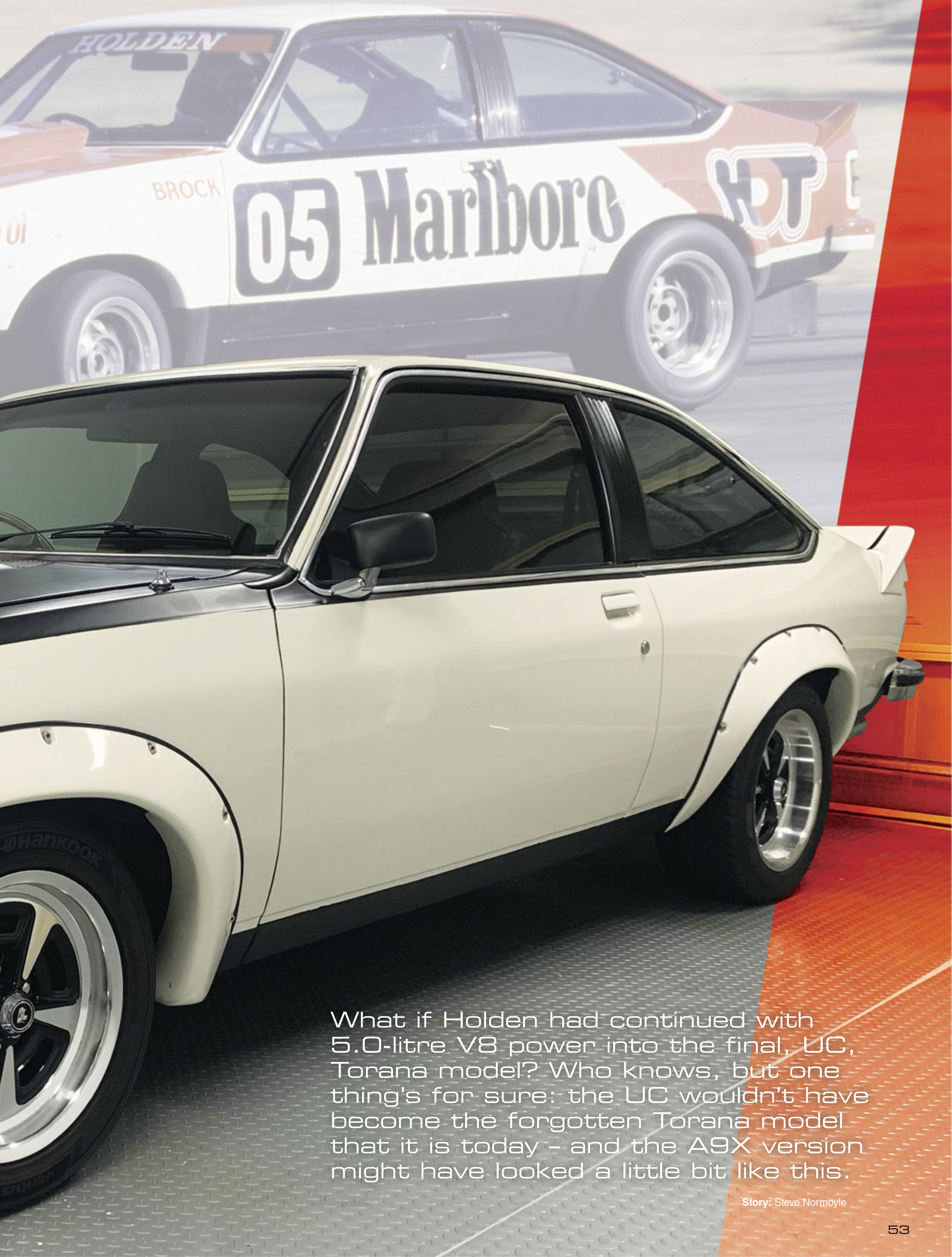
HOLDEN
BROCK
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What if Holden had continued with 5.0-litre V8 power into the final, UC, Torana model? Who knows, but one thing's for sure: the UC wouldn't have become the forgotten Torana model that it is today – and the A9X version might have looked a little bit like this.

Story: Steve Normoyle

MORRIS
Breville
RON HODGSON RACING
ASL
GTX

COMMODORE
Marlboro
Castrol
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3XY
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The Commodore replaced the Torana as GM-H's racing weapon of choice, but not until the 1980s. The LX Torana A9X served through 1978-79 despite the LX having been superseded by the UC model.

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In the long history of Holden high performance, the Commodore and Torana nameplates share a unique bond. From the start of the 1970s until the very end of GM-H itself, some 50 years on, these were the model names the General took into battle in racing. In the beginning it was the Toranas that held centre stage as Holden's hero models (leaving aside the occasional Monaro cameo appearance); then in the 1980s came the Commodores.

The quest for Bathurst success delivered a succession of classic home-grown Holden muscle – from the six-cylinder Torana XU-1 through to the A9X, and then the 1980s Brock/HDT Commodores until the final Group A homologated VN SS in 1990.

A glorious half-century of high performance Torana/Commodore muscle indeed (and, of course, that wasn't the end of the Commodore story: let's not forget the magnificent Commodore SS lineage that followed through the 1990s and into the new century, along with its even hotter HSV cousins).

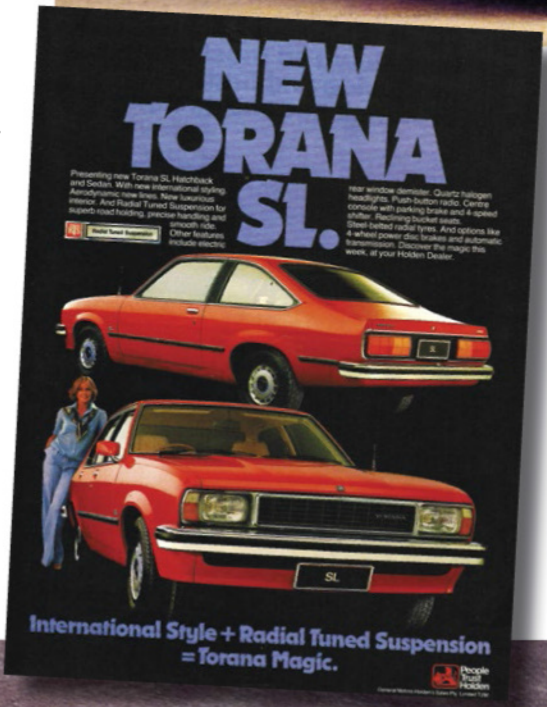
For all that, however, both these iconic Holden nameplates sadly would bow out with little more than a whimper.

It was bad enough for Holden fans in 2020 to witness General Motors' announcement that it would 'retire' the Holden brand. But what made it worse was that the final Commodore model was, in the eyes of many Holden fans, not really even a proper Commodore.

That might be selling the ZB Commodore a bit short, because the VXR version was actually a pretty decent performance car. However, as a fully-imported, all-wheel-drive, mid-sized four-door hatchback with 3.6-litre V6 power, it was no Commodore SS. As a final slap in the face, the VXR was also more expensive than the larger, home-grown, rear-wheel-drive, 6.0-litre V8 Commodore VF II SSV that it replaced…

Similarly, the final Torana model also turned out to be something of a damp squib. Like the ZB Commodore, the UC Torana wasn't a bad car (and also like the ZB, it was a Holden with a distinctly 'European' flavour, courtesy of its all-new square headlight and grille treatment, and all-new interior), but ultimately it amounted to little more than a restyled LX Torana. A restyled LX without a V8 option, that is.

The UC wasn't a sales disaster; it was in fact a good car that boasted a variety of improvements on the LX, and it actually sold reasonably well. But fast forward to 2025



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It's worth noting that when Peter Brock crossed the line to score that historic, record-breaking six-lap Bathurst 1000 win in 1979, the A9X he was driving had been out of production for more than *two years*!

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and it's not a sought-after model among Torana aficionados. In fact, so anonymous is the UC that it wouldn't surprise *AMC* to learn that today's fleet of replica LX Torana A9Xs includes some that originally left the showroom floor as UC models.

UC Toranas began appearing in Holden dealer showrooms in the early months of 1978. The model was released in March of that year – which was only six months after the LX Torana A9X was released.

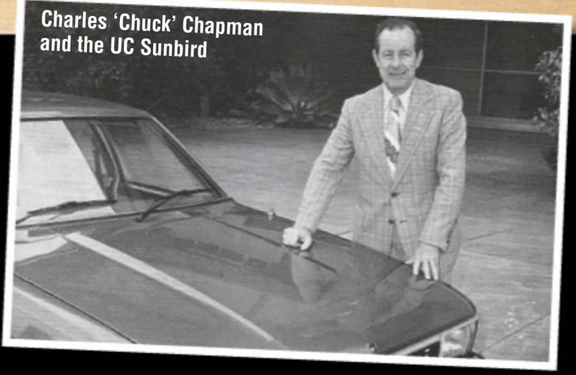
Which makes for an interesting timeline. In terms of model lineage, the A9X was 'obsolete' within six months of it going on sale. In the wider model life of the 1974-'78 LH/LX Torana series, the A9X, therefore, was a kind of an encore performance, albeit one that stole the show…

Just one week after the opening round of the 1978 Australian Touring Car Championship, the LX series (and the A9X along with it), had officially been superseded by the new UC.

On the track it was business as usual, however, with the A9X going on to serve as Holden's frontline touring weapon across the next two seasons, where it won two ATCCs and two Bathursts.

It's worth noting that when Peter Brock crossed the line to score that historic, record-breaking six-lap Bathurst 1000 win in 1979, the A9X he was driving had been out of production for more than two years!

So if the old adage 'win on Sunday, sell on Monday' was still true in 1978-79, then Brocky ought to have been winning Bathurst in a Torana of the same model as the ones GM-H dealers were actually selling. Perhaps a Torana that looks more like the one featured in these pages…


Charles 'Chuck' Chapman and the UC Sunbird

Holden found itself in a bind as the 1970s drew to a close. It had bet the farm on developing the new, smaller Opel-sourced V-car (Commodore VB) as the replacement for the full-sized Kingswood, a programme to which it was committed as early as 1974-'75. But at the same time Ford was opting for a continuation of a larger, Australian-designed car as its Falcon for the 1980s– essentially an upgraded XC but with an all-new, square-edged body to suit the style of the time. GM-H had originally considered taking a similar route with the Kingswood (WA model) but went for the smaller V-car in anticipation of buyers opting for smaller cars, and because it was cheaper than redeveloping the existing Kingswood.

There was a lot at stake. Amid factors such as rising competition from Japanese car makers, a resurgent Ford, and the 1973 oil crisis, Holden's profits and market share in the mid-'70s were both heading in the wrong direction. If the V-car 'gamble' failed, Holden was in trouble. So a contingency plan was hatched to continue the Kingswood beyond the HZ with a rebodied (WB) model, in the event of buyers not taking to the Commodore.

In the end the WB Kingswood never happened (apart from the panel van and ute commercial vehicles), but either way it was important that the new UC Torana (released six months before the VB Commodore) not muddy the marketing waters by presenting as a second (or potentially even third) V8/performance Holden offering.

V8 or no V8, the reality was that with the arrival of the Commodore, the Torana's days were numbered – even though plans were laid for it to continue into the 1980swith a UD model facelift.

In its sales pitch for the UC model, the focus was on creature comforts and equipment levels, not performance.

"Research shows that mid-size car buyers wanting to move up market don't always want larger cars," GM-H managing director Chuck Chapman was quoted in the company's press release announcing the UC Torana on March 15, 1978.

"In many cases they look for better equipped vehicles in the same price size range.

"So we've set out to equip each of the Torana and Sunbird models as complete cars designed to meet specific customers' needs in their specific markets.

"One important result has been the decision to discontinue the V8 engine option on Torana. This is part of a long term model rationalisation plan, geared not only to current consumer preferences, but to trends of the eighties.

"At present V8 sales account for a very small percentage of total Torana volume. This level of sales does not justify either the weight penalty or suspension design compromises required to accommodate V8 power plants."

HOLDEN
SUNBIRD
DEDICATED TO THE DRIVER IN EVERY FAMILY
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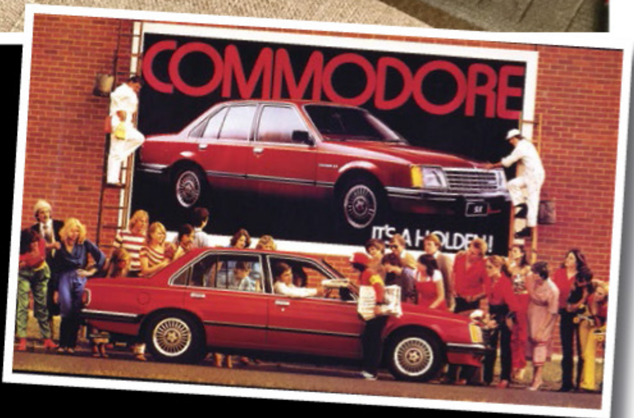


If you wanted V8 power in a Holden from mid-1978 on, you'd be buying a Commodore – or maybe a WB Kingswood or Statesman. When it came to touring car racing, the new Commodore would replace the Torana A9X – although it didn't happen until 1980, some 18 months after the Commodore had gone on sale.

Part of the delay was due to uncertainty from Ford as to its future involvement in racing, and the slow process of formulating the next-generation Group C rules (which wasn't helped by Ford's procrastination).

There were also problems for Holden in that the Commodore was larger, and therefore heavier, than the A9X. It stood to reason, therefore, that with the same 5.0-litre V8 the new Commodore would be slower than the A9X. Further compounding matters was the fact that the new XD Falcon was lighter than the old XC, and had the same 5.8-litre Cleveland V8. Then there were the 5.7-litre Chev Camaros which had just become eligible for Australian touring car racing. The worry was that the heavier-than-Torana Commodore, with only 5.0-litre V8 power, would be uncompetitive against the XD Falcons and the Camaros.

A *Racing Car News* report in late 1978 claimed that within Holden there were three potential powerplants being considered for the Group C Commodore, which according to *RCN* would make its race debut in the '79 Sandown 400. While one faction believed the existing 5.0-litre V8 would be sufficient, another group proposed moving to a 5.7-litre V8 – and yet another was pushing for a turbocharged 4.2-litre V8!

The turbo idea was never likely to go anywhere; as attractive a proposition as a 350 small-block Chev-powered Commodore was, it also was never really on the cards (especially if CAMS held true to the minimum 1000 road versions rule). In the end it was all sorted, in a compromise arrangement that ensured the Commodore 5.0-litre V8 would be competitive, as well as allowing entrants to submit vehicle homologation applications – thus getting around the problem of Ford refusing to do the official homologation of the XD after announcing it had withdrawn from the sport.

It was the perfect solution to what had seemed an intractable problem, and it set the scene for a golden era of '80s touring car racing. However, it also laid the foundations for the demise of Group C just four years later, when the formula became mired in endless bickering over the ad-hoc annual pre-Bathurst performance concession handouts.

An A9X, UC?

If you're a Torana fan, you're either into XU-1s, are a lover of L34s, or you're an A9X aficionado. But that Holy Trinity of high-performance Toranas is bookended by a pair of models so unremarkable that in Torana circles today they're rarely even spoken of.

The original 1967 HB Torana was a puny little 1200cc rebadged Vauxhall that gave not the slightest hint as to the excitement that was to come with the Torana lineage.

Similarly, it was as though the UC was so ashamed of its forebears' thrilling past that it did everything it could to distance itself from the earlier model high-performance Toranas by presenting as what we'd call today a 'white-goods' car, with uninspiring 'standard' six and four-cylinder powerplants.

Not everyone hated the UC, however.

For Queenslander Kyle Herbert, the UC series holds a special place in his heart.

"My father had a UC SL/E when I was growing up," Kyle explains. "It wasn't even the Torana version, it was actually a Sunbird, the four cylinder one. I think I was about eight at the time when he got that car.

Had the Torana A9X performance model carried over from LX to the 'European styled' UC model, it might have looked something like this.

XII Commonwealth Games
Brisbane 1982

"The family holidays were in the Sunbird, and so I always look back on that with fond memories. I loved the styling of the hatchbacks.

"As a teenager, I always wanted a UC hatchback. But they were always a bit too dear at the time."

Then later in life, Kyle did have the wherewithal to own one, and went looking.

"Then I saw this one, done up like an A9X.

"I asked my wife about it, expecting her to say no, but she said, 'let's take a look'. The car was down in Geelong, so we made it into a little family holiday to go down there and have a look.

"I said to my wife, so what do you think? Because I was actually on the fence with it a bit, as I am more into stock standard cars and had always bought them in the past. But she just said, 'buy it', so we did.

"It's the first UC I've ever owned."

According to Kyle, the A9X treatment had been the work of the previous owner. It had been part of a full restoration of the car.

"The guy I bought it off was in his 70s or 80s, and he had only just finished it. He had a plumbing business but was basically retired; he told me that he always liked to have a car rebuild on the go – keeps my mind and body active, he said."

Initially, and presumably in keeping with the UC's defining characteristic as *not* a V8, the car was fitted with a specially-worked 202 six-cylinder engine. However, there was a problem with the build and that engine failed.

"So instead," Kyle says, "he had a 253 V8 built up and he put that in."

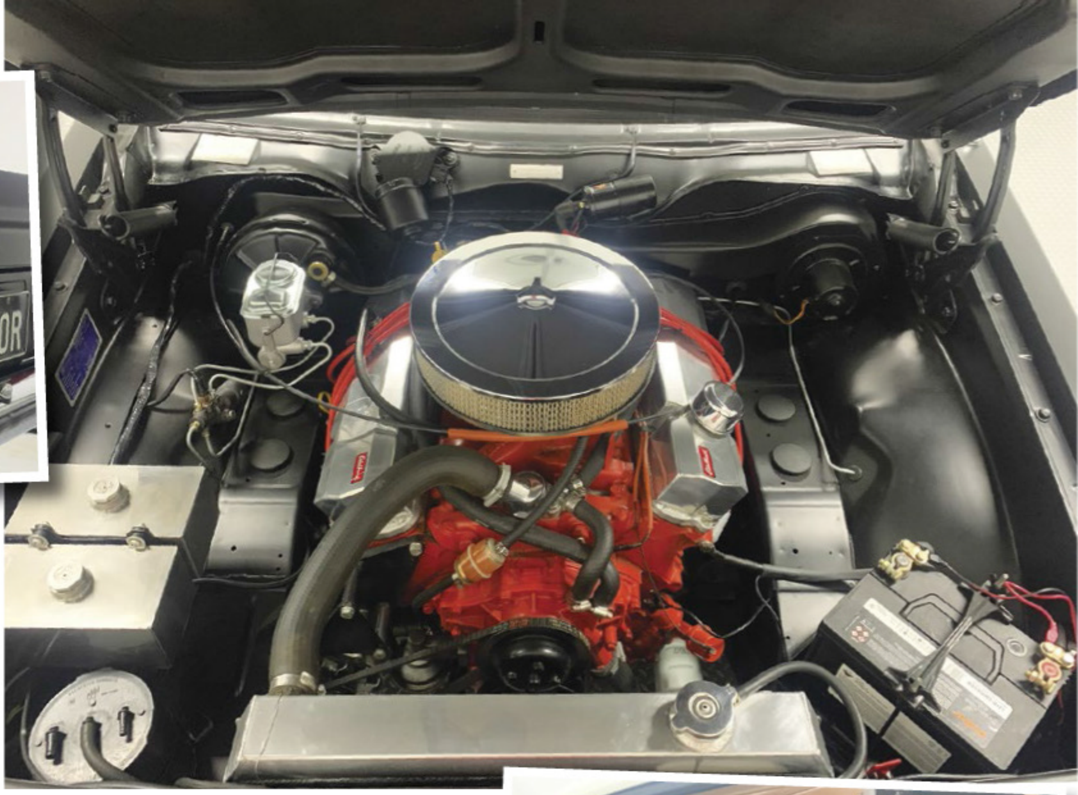
With this car, it obviously was never an attempt at creating a direct 'here's what a UC Torana A9X would have been' comparison. It's more a case of: it might have looked something like this.

As an example, the 15-inch Globe alloys the car rides on are visually reminiscent of A9X wheels, but the A9X's factory-fitted wheels were only 14-inch, and were steel.

Mechanically the car presents as pristine and completely restored, right down the Salisbury diff. And that's where it gets interesting with the UC model, because the Salisbury diff arrangement that was unique to the A9X (everything else in the LH-LX model series had the old Holden banjo-type diff), was carried over into the UC – along with the A9X's special rear floor pan.

As the pics show, Kyle's A9X-inspired UC Torana is notable for the lack of a front spoiler. The original owner hadn't fitted one; Kylie did

TORANA
QLD
640WOR



look at fitting one but wasn't sold on the visuals. The problem is that the UC front end treatment incorporated its own, modest, front spoiler/bib arrangement which was different from the standard LX, for which the A9X from spoiler was designed. Had there been a UC Torana Bathurst special, it would have required something all-new from the likes of Leo Pruneau or Phil Zmood at Holden's design department.

"In the end I decided it looked better without the front spoiler," Kyle says. "It looked very 'slabby' at the front, rather than the more discreet way it looks on the actual A9X, tucked in under the bumper bar."

The rear spoiler doesn't look quite right either – viewed from the side there's a gaping cutout. That, of course, is where it accommodates the LX's wraparound tail lights; a feature of the UC was its very different, large, non-wraparound lights.

As a car that's not far from 50 years old, the A9X-flavoured UC Torana turns heads whenever it's out on the road.

"When you go for a drive in it, the reactions you get from the public are just so encouraging. I've never owned a car quite like it."

Was there ever any negative feedback from Torana purists, we wondered? None, says Kyle.

"I've even had wolf whistles from schoolgirls! Maybe it was because there weren't many UCs made, so maybe that's why the kids seem to like the car – it's not a familiar looking car."

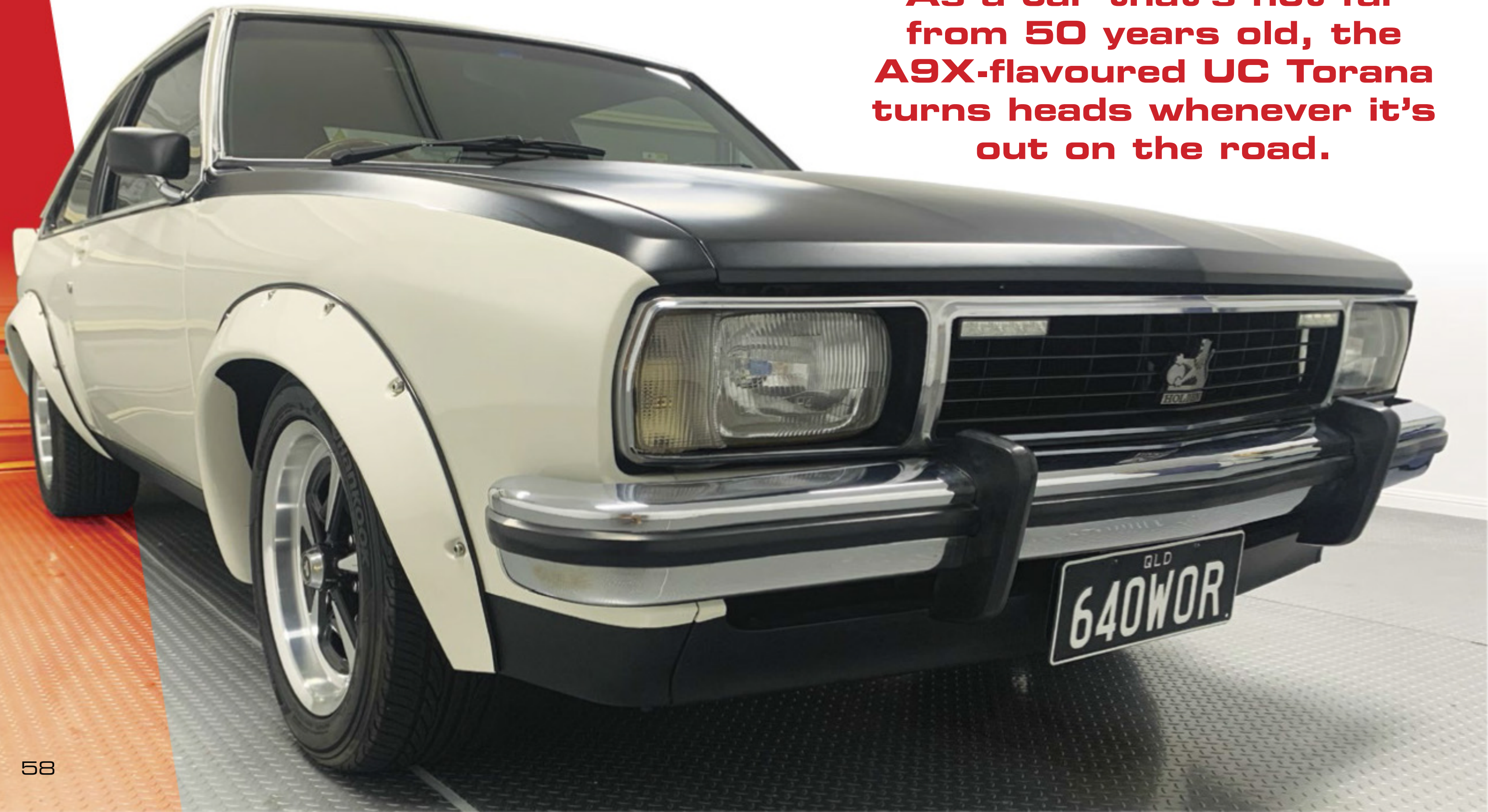
The car is currently being listed for sale by Australian Muscle Car Sales. Kyle says that changing circumstances have forced him to put it on the market.

"I am a car collector and a car enthusiast. But we are downsizing the house – I've got four cars but only a two-car garage.

"I guess that one of the attractions of the car is that of course the A9X is very popular, it's a classic Holden, but it would have been nice to see what it would have looked like had they kept it going with the UC."

Whoever does buy it, *AMC* hopes they tackle the problem of the missing front spoiler. We think that with the UC's subtle bonnet bulge that faint suggestion of the A9X's trademark centre-bonnet air intake, the completely finished article would really look a treat.

As a car that's not far from 50 years old, the A9X-flavoured UC Torana turns heads whenever it's out on the road.



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AMCO
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KUBOTA TRACTOR

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ZUPPS
ROADWAYS
TAA

DUNLOP
BP SUPER
HOLDEN
Marlboro
15
Castrol
TAA
GTX
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Formula Torana A9X

The Torana A9X is not a car that needs introduction. It was the last and undoubtedly the best race homologation Torana that Holden ever produced – in truth, it was probably the car HDT boss Harry Firth would have preferred the LH Torana L34 to have been three years earlier, had Harry been given carte blanche by GM-H during the L34's gestation period. Being as the A9X was an LX model Torana, Holden took advantage of being able to produce it in stunning hatchback form. That made the A9X unusual – and maybe even unique – in world touring car racing in that it was a touring car race homologation special that was available in two and four-door configuration body shape. If there has been another homologation race special before or since the A9X that's incorporated multiple body styles (and even a different rear spoiler from hatchback to four-door), we can't think of one. Volvo did race its five-cylinder 850 series as a wagon and a sedan in Super Touring in the '90s, but we're not counting Super Touring as it didn't require a special-build high-performance homologation model. The other oddity with the A9X, as the UC Torana feature in the preceding pages outlines, is that only months into its competition life the LX model on which it was based went out of production. For most of the two-and-a-bit years the A9X raced, it wasn't the Torana model you'd see in Holden dealer showrooms. More importantly, though, it got the job done on the track: it was also Holden's singularly most successful touring car model. Leaving aside the crushing defeat the A9X suffered in 1977 in its first appearance at Bathurst (though Peter Brock did score a debut race win for his Bill Patterson Racing A9X Hatchback in the Hang Ten 400 at Sandown three weeks before the Moffat Ford Dealers 1-2 form finish at Bathurst), the A9X won basically everything in Australian touring car racing that there was to win. It culminated, of course, in that six-lap '79 Bathurst win for Peter Brock and Jim Richards, with Brocky sensationally setting a new lap record on the very final lap. By then, and with Ford having quit the sport once more, leaving Holden and the Torana A9Xs with no opposition other than other A9Xs, the Australian touring car racing scene had become known, almost disparagingly, as 'Formula Torana'.

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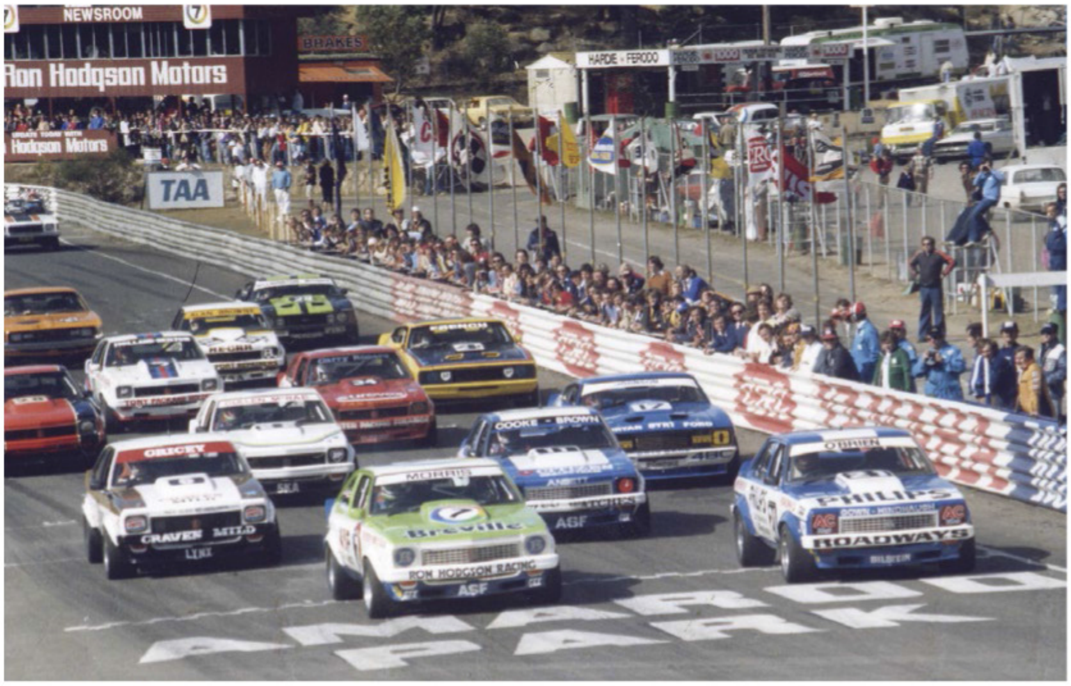
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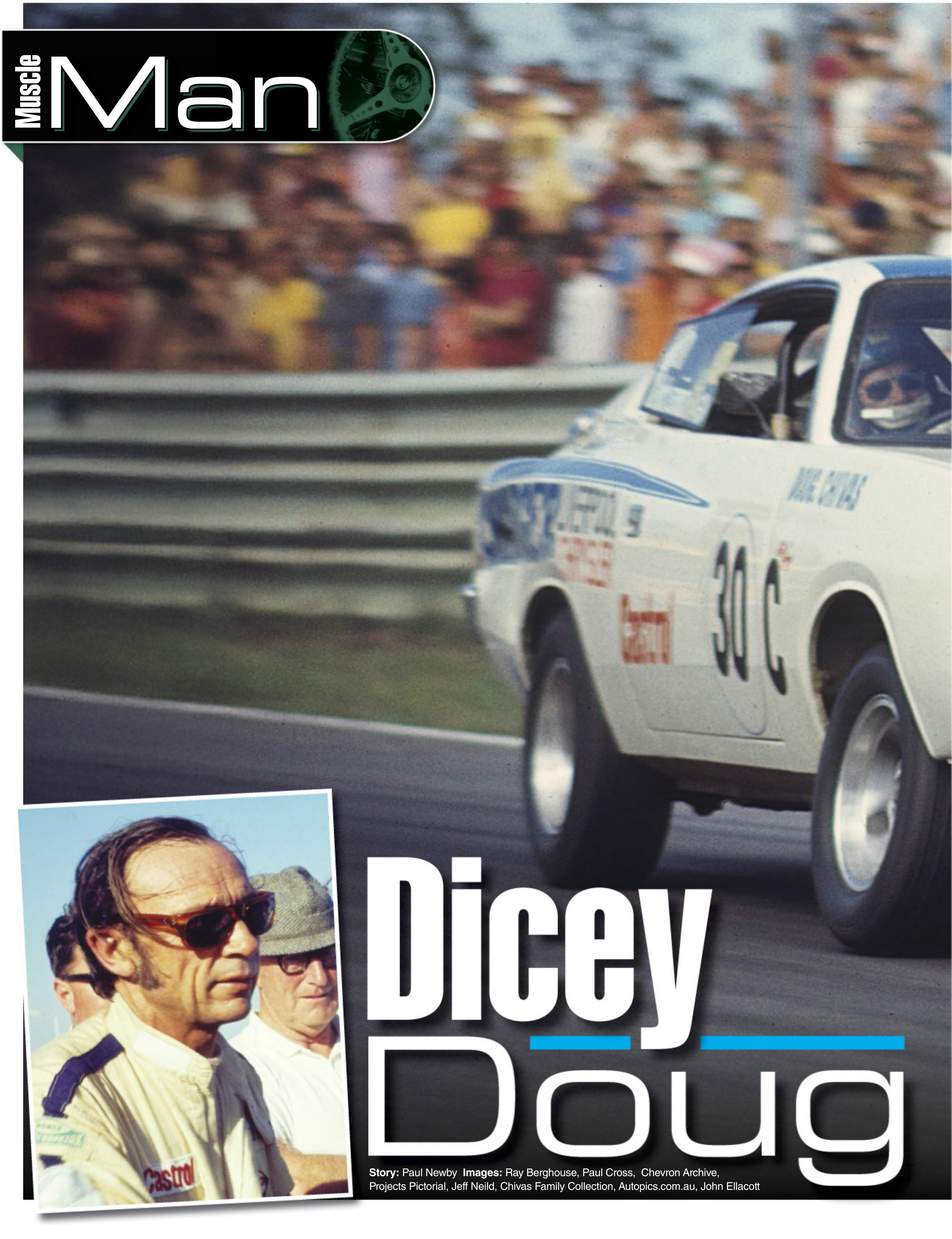
DOUG CHIVAS
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Dicey Doug

Story: Paul Newby **Images:** Ray Berghouse, Paul Cross, Chevron Archive, Projects Pictorial, Jeff Neild, Chivas Family Collection, Autopics.com.au, John Ellacott

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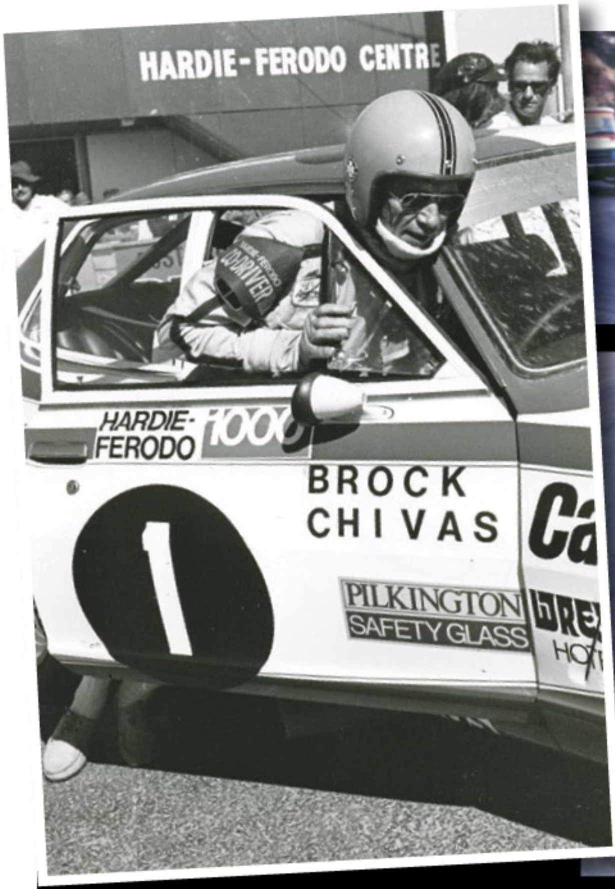
Doug Chivas' contribution to Australian motorsport goes way beyond the dramatic scenes of October 1, 1972. Like many drivers of the muscle car era, the late, great Chivo's success was not limited to touring cars.



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LIVERPOOL CHRYSLER
Castrol

Introduction

One race and one infamous image is all you need to be reminded of Doug Chivas – pushing the HDT Torana XU-1 up the Bathurst pitlane in 1973. It is an unforgettable moment in Bathurst racing history, but it paints a very unflattering picture of the then 51-year-old driver, affectionately known as Dicey Doug or Chivo. Indeed, it sells his stellar career well short.

Chivas raced some iconic sports cars early in his career – Lotus, Austin Healey and Jaguar – with his trademark smooth style. However, his frontline career didn't really kick-off until after he turned 40! In 13 Bathurst 500/1000 starts, he garnered eight top 10 finishes, two outside the top 10 and three DNFs, of which two were co-driver accidents and the other a blown engine. It appeared that he never crashed a car, which was why he was always sought-after for co-driving duties.

He was a very versatile driver. Though he never competed in the various Round Australia trials of the '50s, he discovered the world of rally and trials almost by accident. He won his first ever rally/trial; the following year he was NSW Rally Champion. Impressive drives in the 1968 London to Sydney Marathon and 1970 Round Australia Trial saw him step up to works rally driver status. He was part of the crack Mitsubishi Rally Team during the early 70s, with outright wins and top five finishes in the Southern Cross Rally – rallying's 'Bathurst'.

It may be over 20 years since Chivas' passing (in 2004) at the age of 82, but he is still fondly remembered as a topflight driver on both bitumen and dirt. *AMC* has hit the archives to uncover his racing and rallying legacy and talked to the few contemporaries around that knew or raced against Dicey Doug.

Bob Davis

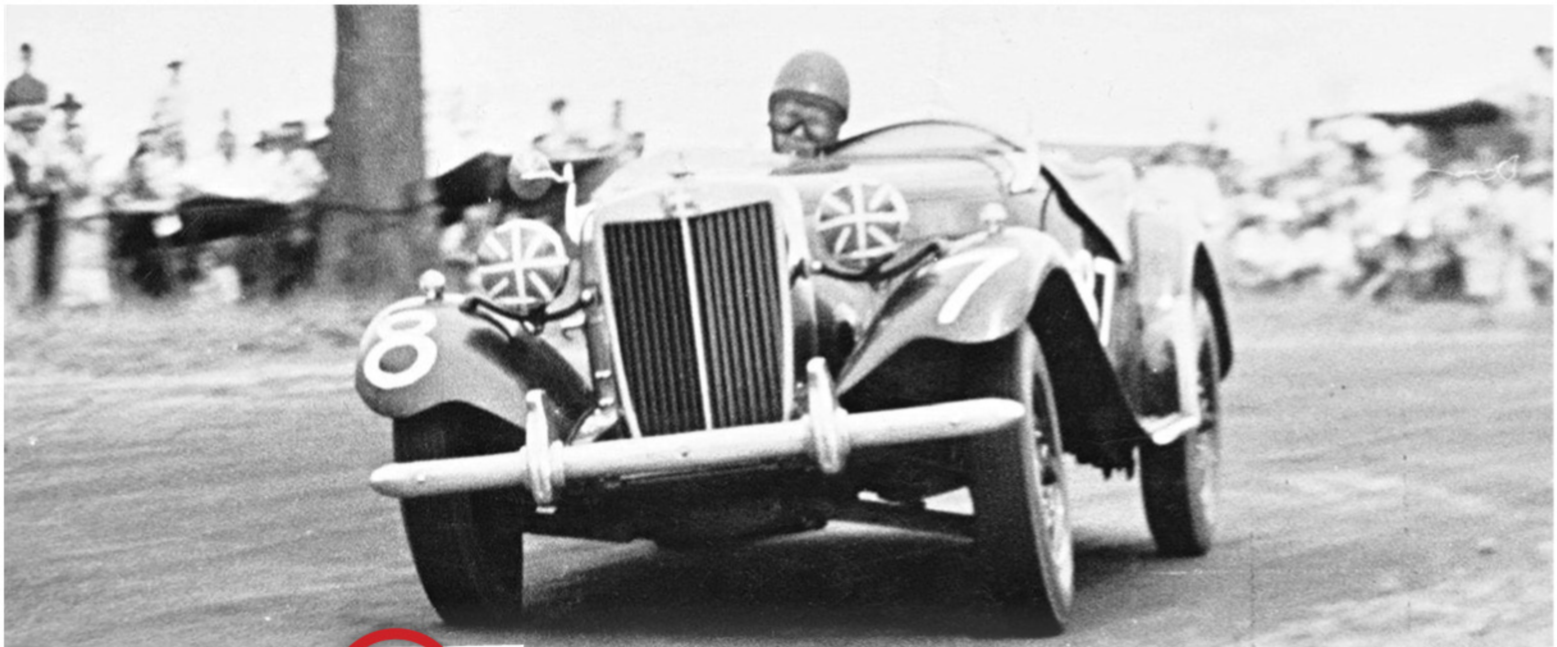
Left: Identification photo for Chivas' enlistment in the army, 1941.

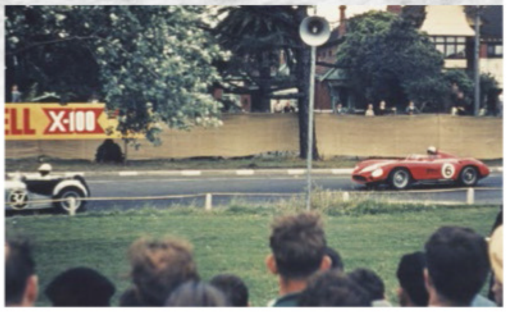
Early days

Douglas Gordon Chivas was born in Granville in Sydney's west on 21 September 1922. His father, Nathaniel, had a business supplying and maintaining dental equipment and the family lived in the comfortable leafy North Shore suburb of Lindfield. Before the war Doug's main interest was motorcycles and he dabbled in scrambles and dirt track racing at places like Blacktown and Vineyard.

In November 1941 he enlisted in the army, then known as the AIF (Australian Imperial Force) where he trained as an electrical fitter, and served in the 2/104 General Transport Company and 2/28 Transport Platoon as a driver. According to official service records, he saw active service when he travelled to Moratai (in the then East Dutch Indies) in May, 1945, as part of the Pacific War conflict. He returned to Australia in April 1946 and soon married his girlfriend, Joy. Doug Junior (1947) and Steven (1949) soon came along, with youngest son Neil born in 1954.

Married life meant the end of motorcycles for Chivas, so he took to four wheels, starting out with a 1937 Vauxhall 14 that he ran at the Mount Druitt airstrip in 1949. The Vauxhall made way for a Fordson panel van and then a Rover 75. These vehicles were used in trials and the Rover competed at the original Mount Druitt airstrip circuit. In 1952 he raced a friend's MG TC at the challenging Parramatta Park circuit before buying his own MG TD – his first serious racing car, winning several races at the new Mount Druitt circuit. Chivas raced the TD in the 1954 Mount Druitt 24 Hours Race with co-drivers Frank Dent and Peter Lowe. The trio finished second in class and eighth overall despite an 80-minute pitstop to replace a blown clutch. It would be the swansong for the MG, as family pressures and finances put a stop to his hobby. Not for the last time, Doug Chivas retired from motor racing.





Top: Chivas in action in the MG TD, Mount Druitt, 1954. Above left: Chivas (circled) was an early committee member of the ARDC. Above: Racing the Lotus 6. Above right: In the Lotus at Albert Park, chased by Jean Behra's factory Maserati 300S. Bottom: The Lotus 6 sported enclosed 'KM 300' bodywork in 1957.

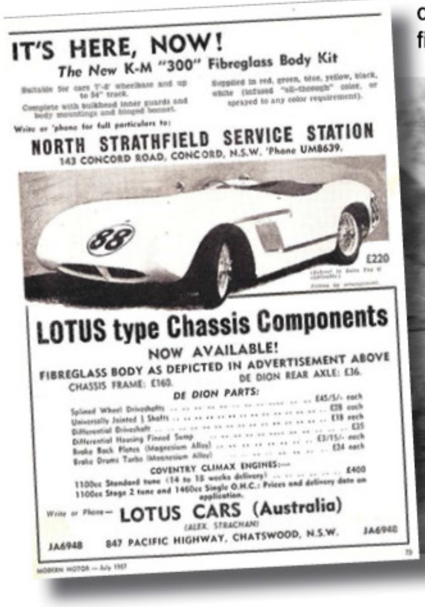
Gun for hire – Doug gets serious

Chivas spent 1955 on the other side of the pit wall, assisting with handicaps and administration for the newly formed Australian Racing Drivers Club (ARDC). Later in the year he convinced friend Col James to go halves and buy Paul Meyer's rapid MG TD, complete with an entry for the September Mount Druitt meeting. Chivas cleaned up, winning all three races with ease, but it was with a funny looking English lightweight special called a Lotus that put him on the map as an emerging star – at 34!

Amateur racer Alex Strachan landed the first Lotus in Australia in late 1955 and was tentatively appointed the Australian Lotus agent. As it turned out, the Lotus Six or '6' would be the only Lotus he took delivery of! To avoid import duties and sales tax, the 6 was delivered in kit form and assembled at Strachan's ladies underwear factory (!) in Waitara, in Sydney's north. Chivas was friendly with Strachan and helped him set up this revolutionary new car at Mount Druitt.

Strachan raced the Lotus without distinction in early 1956 at the Moomba TT at Albert Park and at Easter Bathurst. However, it was a brush with CAMS officialdom that would see Chivas in the driver's seat. The popular REDEX Trial was replaced in 1956 by two trials by rival oil companies Ampol and Mobil. The Melbourne based Mobil Trial was endorsed by CAMS whilst the Sydney based Ampol Trial was not. Everyone involved in the Ampol Trial were sanctioned by CAMS and Strachan, who had been the Chief Steward, was disqualified from racing for five years! An arrangement was put in place where Chivas raced the Lotus for Strachan over the next year.

At the October 1956 Bathurst meeting Chivas was entered in the 26-lap handicap NSW Road Racing Championship race. His dice with John Ralston's winning MG TC Special was the highlight of the day, finishing within a couple of seconds. There was a class win in the Australian Hillclimb Championship at Bathurst. The 1956 Australian Tourist Trophy at Albert Park included motor racing royalty Stirling Moss and Jean Behra in factory Maserati 300S. Chivas put in a giant killing performance before retiring after 24 of the 32 laps. He raced into 1957 as the Lotus was rebodied with a fibreglass 'KM 300' bodyshell making it faster in the straights but slower in corners. At (October) Bathurst he drove an MG Special for Robin Orlando. (Strachan's licence was reinstated in 1958 and he resumed racing the Lotus 6.)



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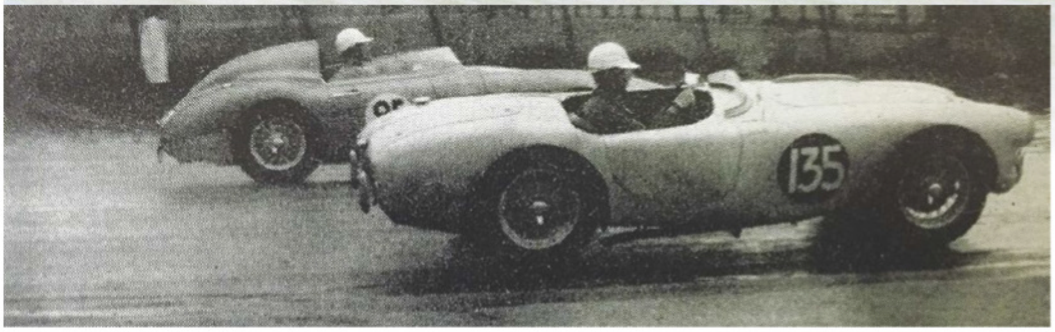
MODERN MOTOR — July 1957



Main: John Ellacott's superb colour photo of Chivas in the Leaton Motors Jaguar D Type across The Mountain, 1960. Left: Splashing through the rain to an incredible second outright in the ex-Mary Seed AC Ace-Bristol at Bathurst in 1959. This superlative drive put Chivas on the map. Below: The Leaton Motors equipe circa 1959 from left; Frank Matich – Jaguar D Type, Chivas – Austin Healey Sprite, Brian Foley – Austin Lancer.

Racing for Leaton Motors

After the Lotus, Chivas found himself without a drive and 'retired' again. He didn't return until 1959 when he was approached by ambitious Sydney used car dealer George Leaton. Leaton Motors had Frank Matich (Jaguar C Type) and Brian Foley (Austin Lancer) on the books and needed a driver for their new Austin Healey Sprite. Finished in a distinctive pale yellow with black stripes (including their converted bus/transporter), the team cars looked the part. Chivas drove the Sprite at the 1959 Easter Bathurst meeting, but despite his considerable skills he was lapped in both sports car scratch races. Better days lay ahead.

Chivas was set to race the Sprite at the October Bathurst meeting, but fate intervened as he explained to Mike Berry in a *Racing Car News* interview in 1978:

"Leaton got involved with a bloke named (Oliver) Steele, who had bought the ex-Mary Seed AC Ace Bristol *(see AMC #143 for more details)*. He did all his own maintenance, but they painted his car in the team colours, so he was in the team. The following October the car was entered to race at Bathurst, but as he didn't have a full licence he couldn't drive it. So they put a young fellow, a Dutchman *(actually former team driver Horst Kwech!)* in my Sprite and they put me in the (AC Ace) Bristol. It was a shocking day, shocking weekend really. Saturday practice and I went out in this car but the steering was all worn – slack right through. On the dry road I couldn't steer the rotten thing and I'm going around the mountain at Bathurst in some atrocious time. They got the egg timers out for me, I was so slow – dead set – four minutes at least.

"This was dreadful and I thought, 'There's only one thing to do – get out my rain dance act – that's got to help.' You wouldn't want to know, it was the blackest, wettest day I can ever recall at Bathurst! Water was running like a river across the track near the Reid Park gates. I've never seen so much rain; the car was full of water, I was sitting in it, I was cold and I was frozen to death. On paper, the best position we could finish in, if all did as they should do, was seventh. I was way back on the grid, some dreadful position. Anyway, we proceeded to knock over some of the lesser lights and I was having a ball, because all the trouble that I had had with the steering in the dry was gone – the tremendous adhesion of the tyres on the bitumen reacting to the stuff that was twisting and turning everywhere was all gone because it was so slippery. It all fell into place in the wet, it was a different motor car and we were knocking over people we shouldn't have been. Would you believe we finished second, behind Phillips in the Cooper Jag, and we were in sight of him over the line!"

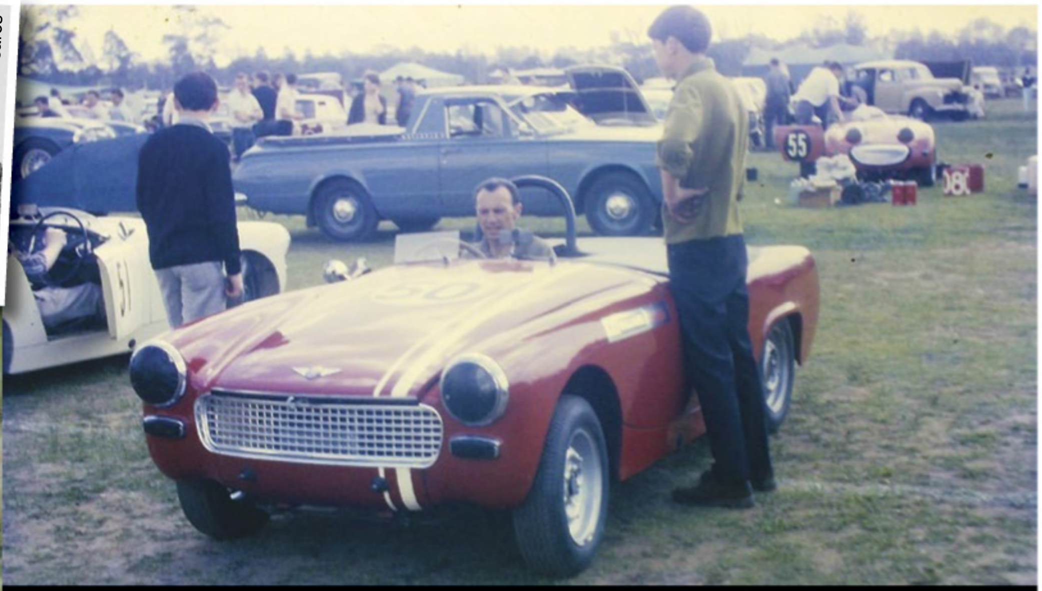
It was certainly the drive of the Bathurst

LEATON MOTORS
LEATON MOTORS
TOTAL

Jock Psaros

meeting. Chivas finished nine seconds behind Ron Phillips' Cooper Jaguar and ahead of a number of thoroughbred European sports cars including Bob Jane's Maserati 300S. His fastest lap of 3:11 in the wet compared to Mary Seed's 3:30 in the dry back in 1956.

In 1960 Leaton Motors bought its star driver Frank Matich a new Lotus 15 Climax, relegating his Jaguar D Type to Chivas. With 250 horsepower and a top speed of over 150mph on Conrod, Chivas at last had a fast car that would allow him to race with the big boys. At the NSW circuits where the team raced, it was the Frank and Doug show. The pair even ventured interstate to Lowood in Queensland, where Matich competed in the Australian Grand Prix and Chivas in the supporting sports car race. In mid-1961 the Jaguar was fitted with an ugly hardtop so that it could compete as a GT car. Matich won the Australian GT championship at Warwick Farm and Chivas saw out the year before the Jaguar was sold on and the Leaton Motors racing team disbanded. Once again without a car to race, retirement beckoned for the veteran driver nearing 40.



A race car of his own

The 1960s saw the Chivas family move out of Sydney to the quiet town of Toukley on the Central Coast. Here Joy Chivas opened a menswear shop, where her husband helped out. He also worked as a driver instructor after hours. However, a class driver like Chivas couldn't remain on the sidelines forever, although it was almost two years before he was back racing.

In the first Bathurst 500, in 1963, Chivas and Ken Wilkinson entered a Morris Cooper in Class B. They won their class after a hard fought battle with the Cooper of Jim Gates/ Mike Nedelko. They competed 125 laps and were sixth outright.

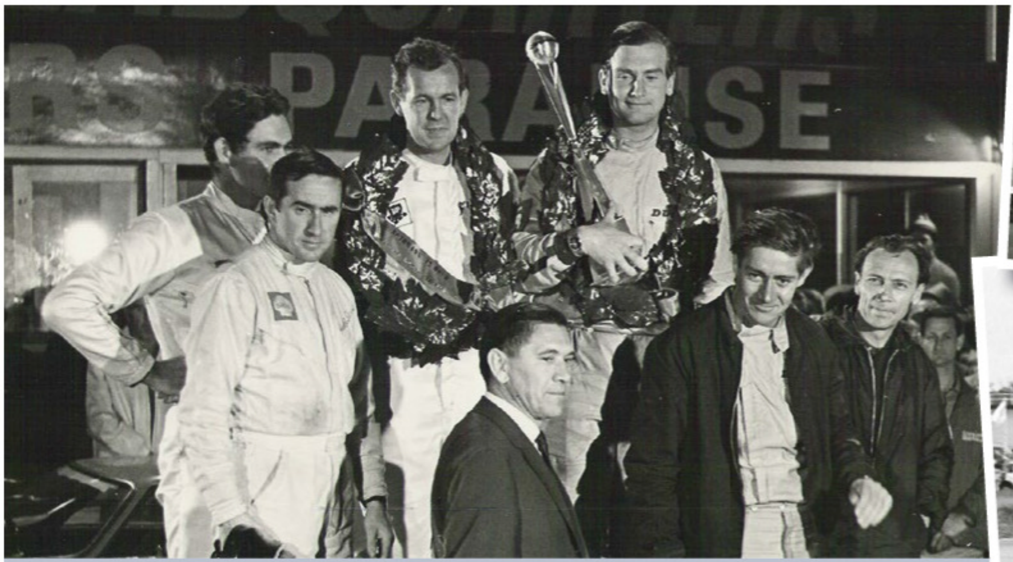
Chivas missed the '64 Bathurst 500 but he did purchase his first race car in over 10 years. It would also be the last race car he owned. The Austin Healey Sprite Mk2A he bought had taken young Novocastrian racer Jim Sullivan to a 'Driver to Europe' prize and British Formula 3. Chivas swapped the twin SU carburettors for a single Weber 45DCOE for the 1098cc A Series engine and went racing. On the NSW circuits, including Bathurst, he was almost unbeatable in his class against young hopefuls such as John Leffler and Bob Skelton. Initially he made the Sprite work with an open differential but eventually fitted at LSD. In winning his class in the production sports car race at Bathurst in 1966 he set a lap record of 3.01. The Sprite was also raced by a teenage Doug Junior before being sold in late 1966.

In 1965 Chivas paired with Mini specialist Phil Barnes in a Cooper S at Bathurst. Barnes hit the fence at Murrays Corner and retired after only 10 laps without Chivas getting a steer. For the following year's 500, Chivas teamed up with eldest son Doug Junior in a Morris Cooper. Although not as fast as the Cooper S, the *père et fils* acquitted themselves, finishing second in class on 119 laps and 17th overall.

While Chivas was not a member of the gun BMC (British Motor Corp) works race team, he was invited to join BMC's trials (rally) team alongside Bathurst 500 winner Bob Holden. First time out in the KLG 300 Trial held on the NSW south coast and tablelands, Chivas and navigator Roy Denny's Cooper S won outright! It would be the start of a topline rallying career that ran parallel with his circuit racing for the next decade.

Above: Chivas' own Mk2A Sprite with Doug Junior at Warwick Farm. Below inset left: Morris Cooper, Bathurst 1963. Below inset right: The Chivas/Chivas Morris Cooper (car 33) chasing the Moto Kitamo/ Kunimitsu Takahashi Datsun in the '66 Bathurst 500. Bottom: The Barnes/Chivas Cooper S (third from left) crashed out after only 10 laps.

SUPPLIES
11



Racing for Alec Mildren

In the mid-1960s Alec Mildren Racing was one of the top teams in Australia. A young Kevin Bartlett was the team's domestic driver, supplemented by the experienced international star Frank Gardner for the Tasman and other big races. The team needed a top-class driver for when Gardner wasn't available. Enter Doug Chivas.

First up was the inaugural Surfers Paradise 12 Hour in August 1966. Though their 1600cc Alfa Romeo Giulia GTZ2 was outclassed by the rapid Ford GT40 and Ferrari 250LM, Bartlett and Chivas bought the little Alfa home third outright. The following year the duo was back at Surfers for the four-hour production race in an Alfa Romeo Giulia Super. Whilst the 1600cc Alfa didn't have the legs on the Harry Firth/Frank Matich XR Ford Fairmont V8, the heavens opened and Chivas was 10 seconds a lap faster than the Fairmont and won the race by three laps. It would be a sign of things to come…

Prior to Bathurst, Chivas kept his hand in rallying his Alfa Romeo *(see rallying section)*. The 1967 Bathurst 500 is remembered as the first of the muscle car era, with the XR Falcon GT, but what's often forgotten is that for Mildren's Alfa Romeo GTVs, it was the one that got away. A series of broken and cracked wheels thwarted the Italian thoroughbred's progress, but the GTV of Chivas and Max Stewart still finished third on the lead lap, less than a minute behind the winning Falcon of Firth/ Fred Gibson. What might have been…

In 1968 Chivas raced an Alfa Duetto (convertible) plus the more powerful 1750 GTV with Bartlett at the Surfers Paradise 6 Hour for sixth outright and at the Bathurst 500 for fourth outright and another class win. However, his luck would run out in the following year's 500 when Chivas' driving partner John French was involved in the infamous first lap crash over Skyline, flattening the white 1750 GTV.

Kevin Bartlett, in a recent interview for *AMC*, has nothing but praise for 'Dicey Doug:' "What a good driving partner he was – no tickets on him at all. We never competed against each other in the team, which I hold very dear. When he handed the car over, you wouldn't even think about what was happening, I knew it would come back the same way you left it. It was total trust."

LOCKH
MOTORS
13

Above left: Chivas on the podium (far right) at the 1966 Surfers Paradise 12 Hour with some famous faces – Jackie Stewart (second left), Frank Matich (third left) and team-mate Kevin Bartlett (second right). Top: Alfa Romeo GTZ2. Second from Top: Ahead of Matich's Fairmont V8 in the Alfa Giulia Super. Above: Chivas drove with Bruce McPhee (Monaro) at Surfers in 1969. Below inset left: In the Alfa GTV that finished third at Bathurst, 1967. Below inset right: Chivas never got to drive the Alfa 1750 GTV in 1969. A victim of the infamous first lap Skyline pile up. Bottom: He shared this Alfa 1750 GTV with Bartlett to a fine fourth at Bathurst, 1968.

Les O'Niell

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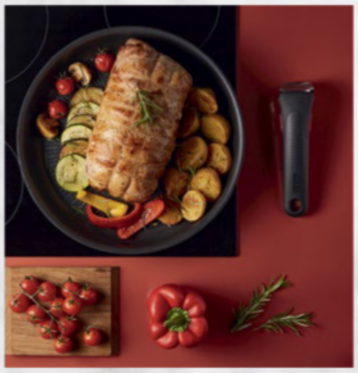

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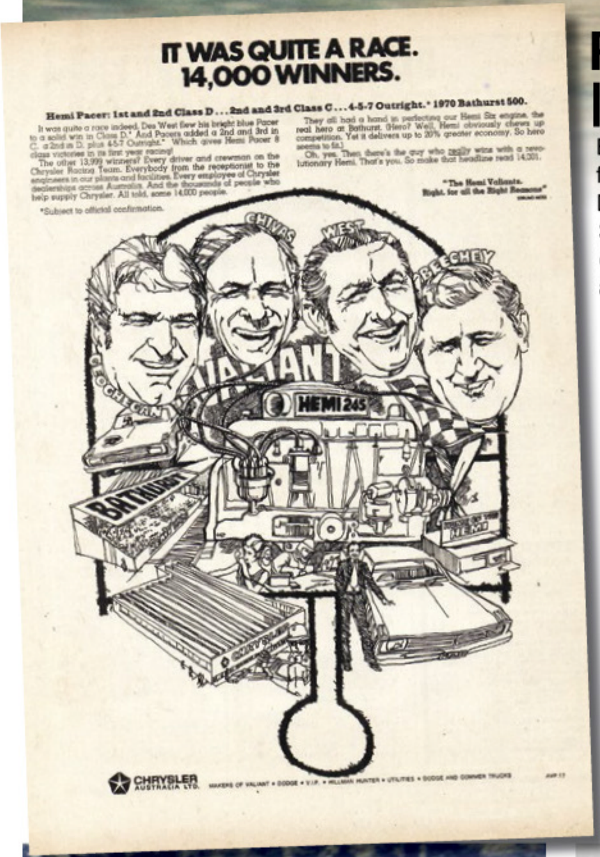

IT WAS QUITE A RACE.
14,000 WINNERS.

Hemi Pacer: 1st and 2nd Class D . . . 2nd and 3rd Class C . . . 4-5-7 Outright.* 1970 Bathurst 500.

It was quite a race indeed. Des West flew his bright blue Pacer to a solid win in Class D.* And Pacers added a 2nd and 3rd in C, a 2nd in D, plus 4-5-7 Outright.* Which gives Hemi Pacer 8 class victories in its first year racing!

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Pacers and Chargers

In 1969 Chivas, along with Leo Geoghegan, Des West, Graham Ryan and Norm Beechey, were signed by the Chrysler factory to race their VF Valiant Pacer. Despite reasonable results at the Sandown 3-Hour, Chrysler gave Bathurst a miss (leaving Chivas to drive for the Mildren team again). He did drive a VF Pacer in that year's Southern Cross Rally *(see rally section)*.

The more competitive VG Valiant Pacer was released in 1970 with its 245 cid 'Hemi' six-cylinder engine. Chivas drove the VG Pacer in a long distance record attempt at Sandown in April. The standing 500-mile record of 111.96km/h he set with Barry Seton still stands. There were regular Sydney outings, including the Oran Park Toby Lee series.

The E31 (two-barrel) and E34 (four barrel) Pacers were homologated for the Sandown 3-Hour. Chivas and Ryan in an E31 finished a lap behind Beechey's E34 in fifth. The duo was paired for Bathurst, their E31 not expected to have the legs on the E34 on Mt Panorama's long straights. In fact, the reverse was true. After a strong run, Chivas was lying third behind the two works Falcon GT-HOs until he blew a tyre a lap from home. Despite a late pitstop, they finished fourth behind Don Holland's Torana XU-1. Into 1971 he was seventh in the (Easter) Bathurst 3-Hour, but broke the differential and locked up the Pacer in spectacular fashion at the Warwick Farm manufacturers championship race.

Chrysler's big news in 1971 was the release of the Valiant Charger. The E38 replete with its triple Weber carburetted 265 cid engine showed that Chrysler meant business. The factory gave the Sandown 250 a miss and instead fronted up a week later to the final round of the Toby Lee Series at Oran Park, a mere fortnight before the big one. Incredibly, Chivas won the 100-lap race on the Charger's racing debut! He started on the second row and was soon up to second behind Colin Bond's Torana XU-1. Over the next 30 laps he charged up to the back of Bond before finding a way by on the last lap when the Torana driver broke his gear linkage and came to a stop.

The Toby Lee result augured well for Bathurst, where Chivas teamed with Graham Moore. But the Charger wasn't the only brand new model at Bathurst in 1971, because Ford had its new XY Falcon Phase III GTHO. The E38 Charger may have been 10 seconds a lap quicker than the Pacer, but the Phase III Falcon was over 10

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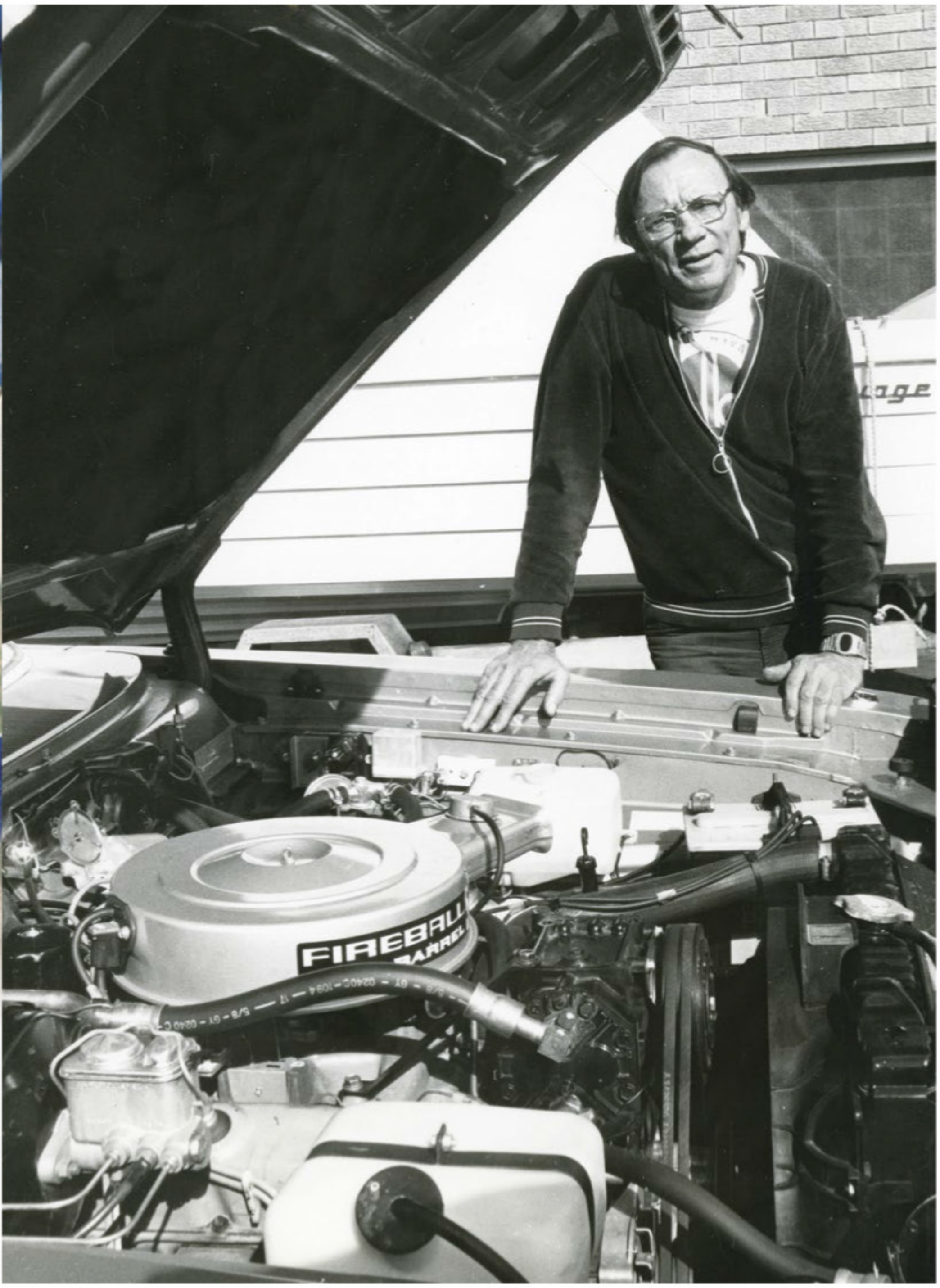
IG CHIVAS
Pacer 245



seconds a lap faster than the old Phase II!

It was to be a disappointing race for the Chrysler team. Geoghegan and Peter Brown finished seventh behind the Falcon steamroller, and Chivas/Moore a frustrating 19th after enduring overheating issues throughout. Moore explained in *AMC #123* how an intransigent team hijacked any chance of a competitive result: “Doug says, ‘I think there’s something wrong with the car. I think it’s got a blown or leaking head gasket.’ He wanted the engine changed. The engineers from Chrysler said, ‘we’ve done all the testing, we’ve never had a problem with head gaskets, why would it be like that now?’ So we get to race day, and straight away our car was slower than it should have been. The engine was really starting to get hot. I came into the pits and told Doug. He said, ‘stuff them – go back out, let it heat up and blow the shit out of it!’ I didn’t blow it up, I did my best to keep it going and we ended up finishing, but a long way down.”

Top: Chivas’ VG Pacer jumps over the Northern Crossing at Warwick Farm, 1971. Top right: Inspecting a Valiant V8 engine bay. Right: Bathurst 1970. Bottom, from left: VF Pacer at Warwick Farm; Chivas with teammates Leo Geoghegan, Graham Ryan and Des West; VG Pacer at Sandown 3 Hour; Skylarking with Kevin Bartlett on the ‘town bike.’

UPDATE
"THE TOWN BIKE"

DOUG CHIVAS
GRAHAM RYAN
35C
Castrol
35 C
VALIANT
Castrol GTX
RGL 781

Peter Schell

CHARGER
C 33
30C
CIBIE
Castrol
30 C
RDM 561

69
Castrol
CIG
Castrol GTX
FIAT

Top left: Chivas in the E38 Charger at the Farm, early 1972. Above: Passing Gary Leggatt's Fiat 850 Sport in the E49 Charger on the way up the Mountain in 1972. Inset right: E38 Charger at Oran Park. Inset bottom left: E38 Charger, Easter Bathurst 1972. Below: The restored Chivas E49 Charger in recent years.

There were a further two manufacturers rounds in 1971. Chivas finished a strong third at the Phillip Island 500 behind the HDT Torana pair of Bond and Brock. He was sixth and second Charger home (behind Geoghegan) in the Surfers Paradise 250. Into 1972 Chivas won the South Pacific championship round, which coincided with the Tasman Series at Warwick Farm, in front of Geoghegan. There were wins at Oran Park under lights and Amaroo Park in the rain. At the Easter Bathurst meeting he was fourth in the preliminary race and fifth in the ATCC 'race of the century' where Ian Geoghegan's Super Falcon outlasted Allan Moffat's Trans-Am Mustang.

In June the infamous 'supercar scare' rocked the local auto industry and motorsport scene. Chrysler had already locked in the homologation of the E49 Charger, an update of the VH with a more powerful 'Hemi' engine and a (belated) four-speed gearbox. However, in the wake of the scare and a change of managing director, Chrysler had withdrawn factory support, leaving their drivers with the task of securing their own (dealer) backing.

For Chivas it was a challenging time. He had recently divorced his first wife, Joy, and had moved from the Central Coast back to Sydney. He set up a business called Doug Chivas Automotive in Regents Park, just across the way from George Shepherd's Bonds Roll Bars. He had also entered the Bathurst 500 but had no car. Enter Formula Vee racer Damon Beck. Sadly, Beck is no longer with us, but shortly after Chivas' death in 2004, he wrote about their Bathurst campaign on *The Nostalgia Forum*.

"This brings us to 1972. The 'V8 Supercar' controversy, which had erupted in the Sunday newspapers in June, effectively cancelled the GM, Ford and Chrysler plans for that year's event. After entries had closed, I had resigned myself to being on the sidelines when I was advised that Doug had lodged an entry for a Charger and didn't have a car. By that time, I was the principal of a small Chrysler Dealership in Katoomba. I had a small-tank E49 in stock and located a new big-tank in stock at Skerman Motors, Dubbo. The great Leo Geoghegan was to run a back-door factory effort under the banner of Sydney Chrysler Dealers. I consulted my Country colleagues and found enough support to give the project the go-ahead. Because it was the last year allowing solo driving, and mindful of my responsibilities to the Country Dealers contributing to the effort, my agreement with Doug was that we would both practice and qualify, with me to be a stand-by if needed during the race. Doug's close-knit team did the effort proud, with the car running as high as second. Ours was the only outright contender to cover 66 laps (in one

94
CHARGER
Castrol
42D
DOUG CHIVAS
GRAHAM MOORE

DOUG CHIVAS
DAMON BECK
SUSPENSION BY
Selby's
Motorcraft
TOW
RT E49
Valiant

DOUG CHIVAS
DAMON BECK
15D
Castrol

ORAN PARK
RACEWAY
CHARGER

stint) in the history of the event. The problems during our only scheduled pit stop are well documented (the crew used cold wheel nuts that jammed on the hot wheel studs and the planned 2min30sec stop blew out to over six minutes). Apart from a late-race call into the pits around lap 110 (when we diagnosed a failed oil pressure sender as the gauge had dropped to zero at full throttle on Conrod Straight – I had Doug rev it up – no rattle, so sent him back into the race), we completed the event without trouble." (Chivas finished third, completing 128 laps.)

"As I recall, post-race preparation amounted to Doug's crew replacing a seized calliper and right rear wheel bearing, changed to the 3.5:1 diff from the Bathurst 3.23 and I drove it to sixth place at Warwick Farm in the December meeting. The total cost of preparation was $103.00 (1972's dollars!)"

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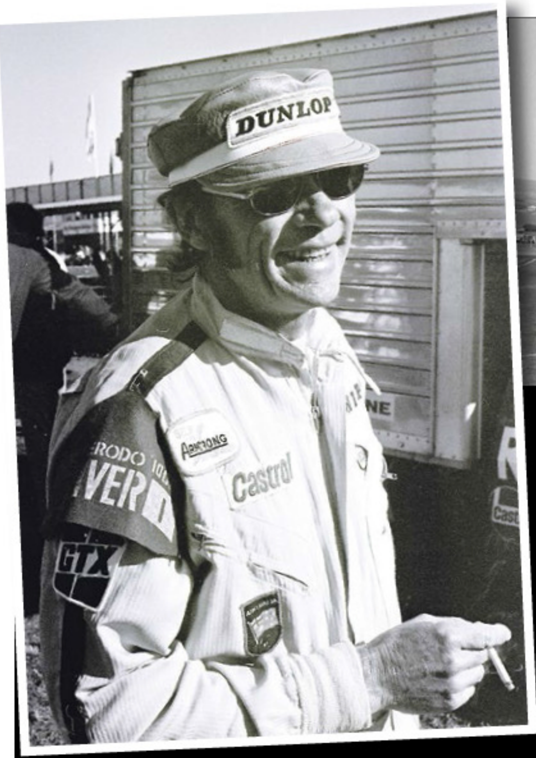

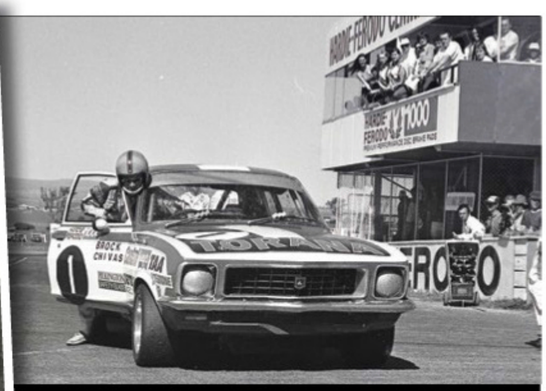

Above; Chivas pushing the out-of-fuel Torana XU-1 up to the pits. Left: Happier times with ever-present cigarette. Inset below: Swapping stories with Kevin Bartlett. Bottom: Rounding Murrays in the XU-1.

Chivas at the HDT

Much has been written about Chivas' one and only Bathurst start with the Holden Dealer Team alongside Peter Brock in 1973, not least *AMC's* forensic analysis of the race in issue 139. But let us wind back a little.

In 1972 all the major teams and drivers had run solo for the last 500-mile Bathurst. However, in 1973 with the longer 1000km distance, two drivers were mandatory. The top two finishing Chrysler drivers in 1972 were Chivas and Leo Geoghegan. As Chrysler had withdrawn from racing, it made sense for the HDT to swoop on these two top class drivers.

To recap the race, Brock's initial stint was 55 laps. Chivas believed he needed to do 50 laps, but was given a pit board to 'GET MAX LAPS' in order to save a quick pitstop at the end. He dropped his revs by 500 and then 1000 to save fuel, and after 56 laps the engine finally cut out at Reid Park. Coasting back to the pits was possible, but Chivas had not practised such a scenario and believed he needed to fire up the engine at Murray's to get into the pits. When he did this the engine started, then cut out. Driving in on the starter was not an option as the Torana had a lightweight aircraft battery. So he pushed up to the pits, losing copious seconds in the process. In any case, Brock pitted again, on lap 144, for a five-gallon splash-and-dash, resuming his chase of Allan Moffat's Falcon Hardtop, 50 second down the road. Ultimately a last lap puncture slowed Brock's pursuit, but he was never going to catch Moffat.

"Doug was a really nice guy," remembers HDT chief mechanic Ian Tate, who was interviewed for this story. "He was polite and worked well with the team. He copped a lot of shit, but I think he did a good job. It was just unfortunate. He was very apologetic and sorry after the race, but what do you say?"

EN FILTER
TORANA
VEN FILTER
TORANA

Rally days

By 1966 Chivas was prominent in BMC circles racing Minis and his Austin Healey Sprite, and was asked to join the BMC Works Trials Team. First time out in a Cooper S at the KLG 300 Trial south of Sydney he and navigator Roy Denny won outright. Next up was the inaugural Southern Cross Rally, a week after Bathurst. With BMC's international rally stars Rauno Aaltonen and Paddy Hopkirk on the roster, fresh from Bathurst, there was no room for Chivas. Instead, he lent on Alec Mildren to supply an Alfa Romeo Giulia Super (from Alfa's press fleet!). Teamed with navigator Lindsay Adcock, they didn't feature. However, in 1967 they won the NSW Rally Championship, winning two of the 10 events and beating the rapid John Keran (Volvo) and the BMC Mini team. In the Southern Cross there was another BMC team hit-out, but their Morris 1100S was not up to the job.

The big event for 1968 was the London to Sydney Marathon in November-December. Journalist and Scuderia Veloce team owner David McKay, fresh from running the new Monaro under the Holden Dealer Racing Team banner at Bathurst, fielded a team of three Monaros for the Marathon. Chivas was recommended for the drive by fellow NSW rally champion Barry Ferguson. Together with navigator David Johnson, they were the first Monaro home in 12th place.

Chivas started his long relationship with Chrysler (and its subsequent partner Mitsubishi) at the 1969 Southern Cross Rally in a dealer entered VF Valiant Pacer with Brian McIlvenna. But the Pacer was not competitive, and they finished well down after an off-track excursion.

The 1970 Ampol Trial was the first Round Australia trial since 1964 as well as Chivas' first such event. It was his debut for the Mitsubishi factory team in their Colt Fastback. The team finished fifth to seventh, with Chivas and Bob Riley sixth.

It was the start of a purple patch for Chivas and Mitsubishi over the next four years with their A50 Galant and A73 Lancer GSR. Mitsubishi

AMPOL TRIAL
MITSUBISHI
COLT
27A
BDJ-186

won the Southern Cross Rally five times in a row (1972-76) with Scottish ace Andrew Cowan. Chivas led the ’71 event and was third in ’72 and ’73. He didn’t finish in ’74, but then there were only seven finishers out of 64 starters! Other notable results included seventh in the epic ’71 Dulux Rally, second in the ’73 Alpine Rally (fourth in ’72) and a win in the ’72 International Rally of the Hills.

At 50, Chivas and regular navigator Peter Meyer were holding their own against some of the world’s top rally drivers. That he only started rallying seriously at the age of 44 is a testament to his sublime car control and endurance.

GALANT
Castrol
17

Above: Chivas with navigator Lindsay Alcock in front of their Alec Mildren prepared Alfa Romeo Giulia Super: Top right and inset: With navigator Bob Riley in the Mitsubishi Colt on the 1970 Ampol Trial. Above right: Doug with wife, Mandy, and AMC founder Ray Berghouse, at the 1971 Southern Cross. Above far right: ‘Helping out’ in the 1969 Southern Cross. Right: Spectacularly sideways in the Galant during the 1972 Southern Cross. Far right: Holden team drivers for the London to Sydney Marathon. Chivas is fourth from right. Below: Chivas and crew navigate the Australian outback in the Monaro GTS.

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MOTORING NEWS

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Geoghegan wins Calder F2 Final

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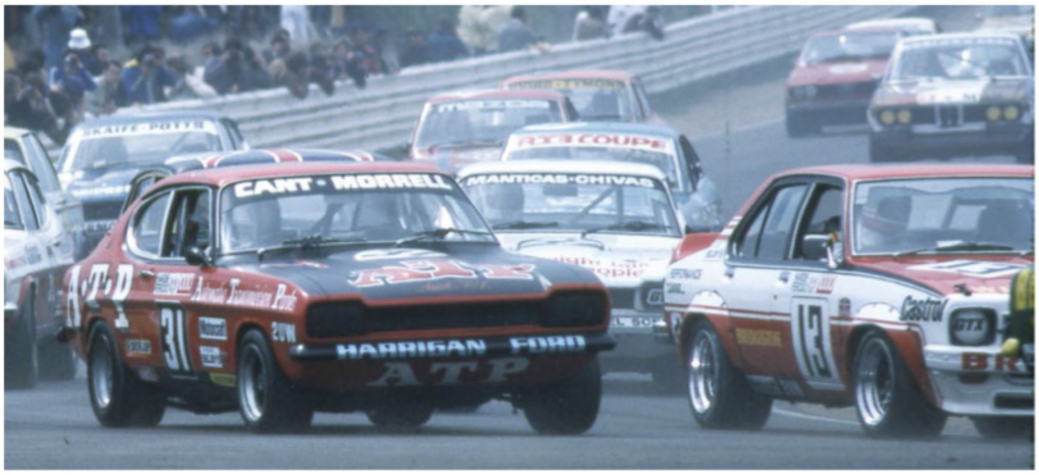
ADA-102



Left: 1976 Bathurst start. Rare shot of Chivas in the white Manticas Capri (middle.) It blew up on lap three. Below: In the Citizen Torana A9X on his way to a fine fourth in 1978, his last Great Race. Bottom: Another top 10 finish in the 'third stringer' Bill Patterson Torana L34 in 1977.

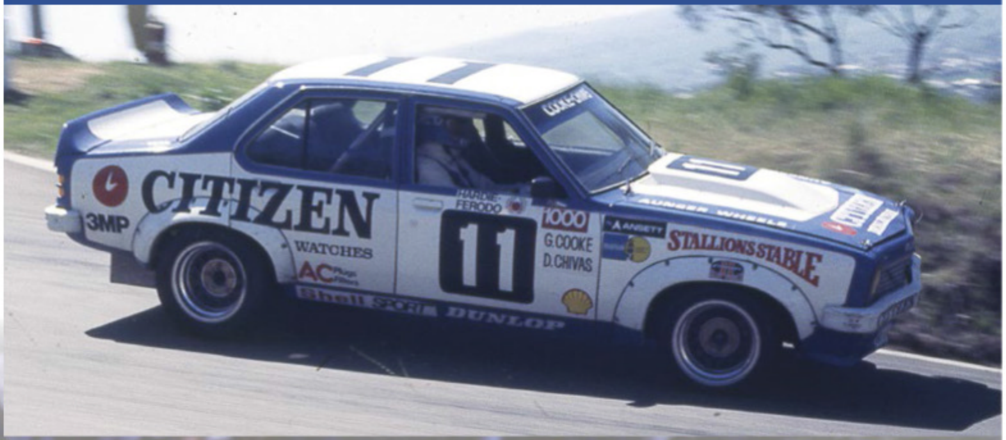
Racing on

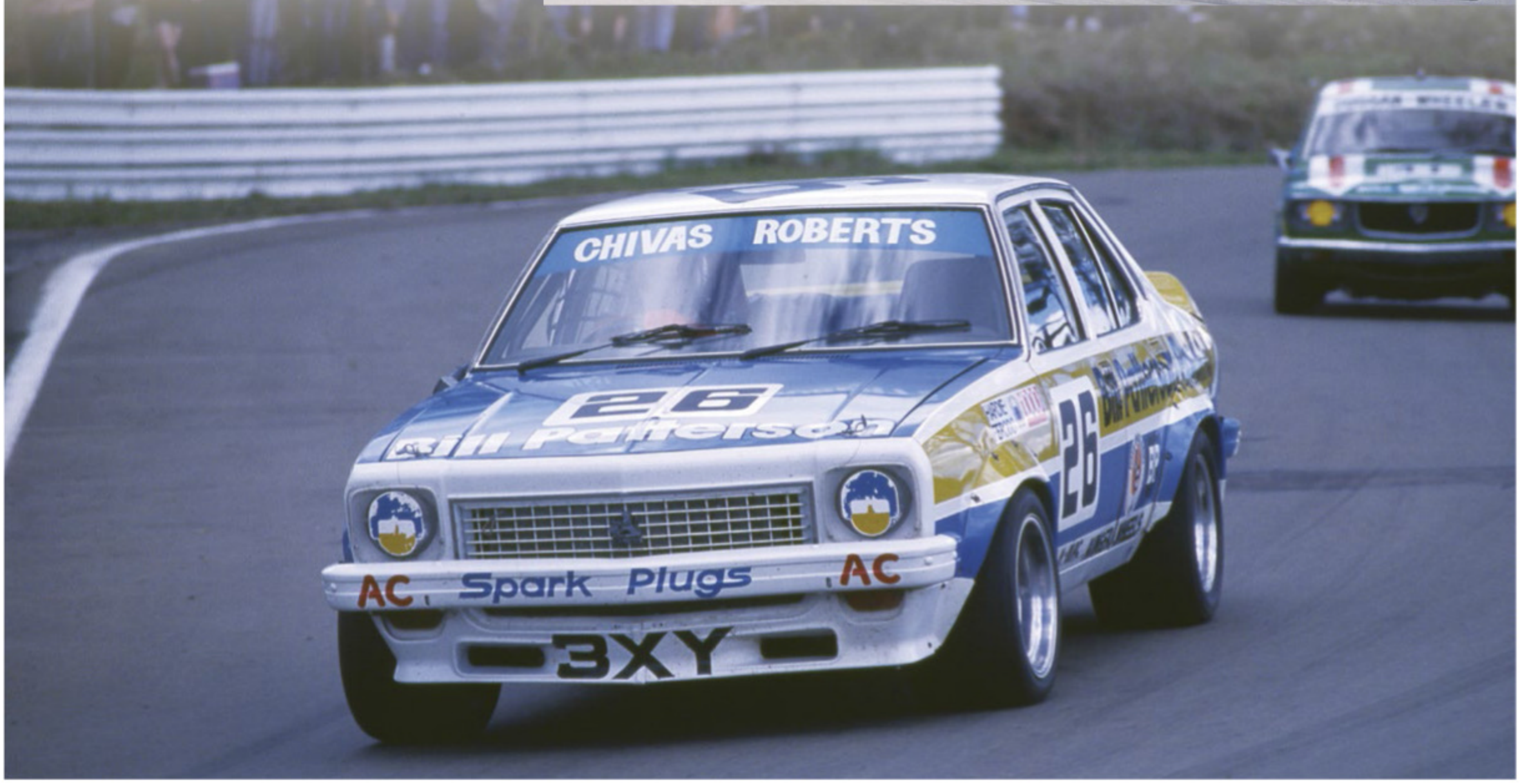
After Bathurst 1973, the phone didn't ring for Chivas. Apart from rallying, there was the odd race in a BMW 2800, but the veteran wouldn't return to the Mountain until 1976 when he co-drove an undercooked Ford Capri with Lakis Manticas. The Capri lasted three laps before its brand new engine popped; Chivas was leading the class at the time. The duo had better luck in the Capri for the tortuous Rothmans 500 at Oran Park the following May. In a classic race of attrition, they lost a lap to an early puncture but still managed to win their class and finish third, only two laps adrift of the winning Warren Cullen/Brian Sampson Torana L34.

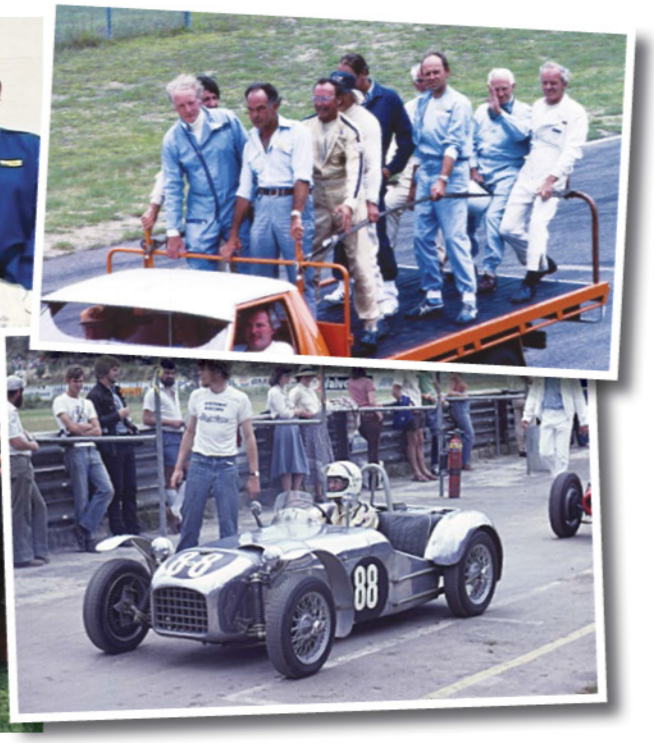
Chivas found himself part of the Peter Brock/Bill Patterson Racing juggernaut for the 1977 Bathurst 1000. There were three team cars – Peter and Phil Brock debuting the new Torana A9X, a converted A9X for internationals Gerry Marshall/Basil van Rooyen, and the original 'Team Brock' L34 for veterans Chivas/Tony Roberts. Very much a third-string entry, Chivas qualified only three places behind Marshall's A9X in 21st. While Brock got off to a great start, Marshall only got going ninety seconds after the start and Chivas pitted after the first lap with jammed rear drum brakes – an L34 weakness. After another pit stop to replace the L34's master cylinder, Chivas was four laps down after seven laps. In a fightback that went unnoticed, the veteran pair were only nine laps adrift at the end, finishing seventh.

The Bill Patterson Racing Torana L34 was sold to Sydney racer Garry Cooke, who with Kiwi open wheeler ace Dave McMillan finished sixth at the Oran Park Rothmans 500. With McMillan unavailable for Bathurst (he was racing Formula Super Vee at Watkins Glen), Cooke recruited good friend Chivo to drive his Torana (now in A9X spec). Qualifying didn't go to plan – they were 27th on the grid – but the race was another matter. Only an unscheduled pitstop to replace an oil pressure relief valve and an oil top up delayed the duo. The Torana ran hard all day with Chivas bringing it home in a magnificent fourth place, on 158 laps. It was a great way for the 56-year-old veteran to bow out.

The Torana ran hard all day with Chivas bringing it home in a magnificent fourth place, on 158 laps. It was a great way for the 56-year-old veteran to bow out.







Above left: Among racing giants in Adelaide 2001. A laughing Chivas is sitting third from left. Inset top and below: At an Amaroo Historic meeting in the 1980s with an old friend – his Lotus 6.

Later years

Chivas wound up his automotive workshop and moved to Mandurah, south of Perth, Western Australia, where his second wife Mandy came from. When Rally Australia was held in Perth, Chivas volunteered his services and was a familiar face within the Ralliart (Mitsubishi) factory team. He was also involved with The Charger Club of WA and The Doug Chivas Memorial Track Day, held every year at the Collie Motorplex, is named in his honour. He and Mandy travelled around the country in their campervan, popping in to see old friends like Kevin Bartlett – KB still has the hacksaw they used to instal a solar unit on the van!

Chivas never truly hung up his helmet. At the 2001 Adelaide 500 there was a three-lap demonstration race featuring 12 legends of motorsport, including the Geoghegan brothers, Allan Moffat, Colin Bond, Kevin Bartlett and Norm Beechey racing the cars they made famous. Chivas was easily the oldest competitor racing his old E49 Charger against mainly V8 Falcons and Chevs but still finished sixth. In August 2002 there was a national meeting at Hidden Valley, Darwin that featured HQ Legend races including a two-driver two-hour enduro. Chivas was teamed with former national sidecar champion (and good mate of Doug Jnr) Gav Porteous. Whilst the duo didn't feature in the preliminary races, they actually won the two-hour endurance race! It would be Chivas' last race – he was a month off turning 80 – but what a way to go out!

Family connections

Doug Junior, the eldest of Doug's sons was a BMC apprentice mechanic when he raced with his father in the 1966 Bathurst 500. But his passion soon turned to two wheels along with younger brother Neil – they teamed up in three Castrol Six-Hour races. However, Doug Junior made his name in sidecar outfits with then partner/passenger Margaret Halliday winning several national titles plus back-to-back Australian Grands Prix at Bathurst in 1984 and 1985. Europe beckoned but the competition there was tough. There were some big crashes including one at Bathurst's new Chase that knocked him around. He was later mentor to Australian sidecar champion Gavin Porteous and Australian speedway sidecar champion Darrin Treloar, who was his first apprentice. Doug Junior died of bowel cancer in 2020. He was 72. His son Darren followed a different sporting path. A golfing professional, he won the NSW Open in 1994.

Neil Chivas was a motorcycle racer, but unlike his older brother Doug, he raced solos. He had many wins on production motorcycles, included winning the 1979 Castrol Six-Hour with the late Alan Hales. He was runner up the following year to a young Wayne Gardner. He died in 2013. He was only 59.

Rod Chivas is Doug's second cousin and has assisted the writer with this profile. "I first met him at the 1968 Tasman round," he recalls. "He was racing the Alfa Romeo Duetto (in a support race) for the Mildren Racing Team. I was 14." Later Rod caught the racing bug and drove a Triumph Spitfire and TR6 in club racing. "He built a couple of engines for the Triumph and would dyno-tune them. He was a smart mechanic and engineer. For example, with his Sprite he would loosen the rear spring bolts, so going around the corner the whole axle would move jamming the wheels in the guard and the inside wheel wouldn't spin. Genius! A poor man's LSD!"

The Chivas name is being kept alive today by another second cousin, Ian Chivas. The Sydney based Chivas raced production cars and is currently competing in Aussie Racing Cars.

Above: Ian Chivas in Aussie Racing Cars. Above left: Neil Chivas won the 1979 Castrol 6 Hour aboard a Suzuki GS1000. Below left: Doug Chivas and Margaret Halliday on the Bathurst grid in 1986. Below right: Rod Chivas (car 14) in his Triumph Spitfire at Amaroo Park.

Leyland brother

LYNX
ENGINEERING
21

As a mechanic at BMC/Leyland, Noel Delforce was part of the development team on the Leyland P76. He also raced a series of BMC/Leyland Sports Sedans, with generous backdoor support from his employer – he'd even been planning to race a P76 two-door Force 7 when Leyland shut its doors in 1974.

Story: Steve Normoyle **Images:** Project Pictorials, Autopics.com.au, Chevron Archive,Delforce Collection

Noel Delforce was born into the motor industry. Cars were the family business. The Delforce family ran a service station/ car dealership business in Wyong on the NSW Central Coast. They sold American brands Dodge Fargo, Plymouth and de Soto, as well as Morris (which was later absorbed into the British Motor Corporation, or BMC). Delforce would go to learn his trade as an apprentice at BMC/Leyland – and was still there when the company was shut down at the end of 1974.

His father died when Noel was six months old. His mother kept the two businesses running while raising Noel and his elder brother, Russell, as a single parent.

"One of my jobs when I was about eight or nine was to drive brand new Morris Minor 1000s from the display yard back into the workshop of a night time," Delforce says.

Noel followed Russell into an apprenticeship at BMC at Zetland in Sydney. It was 1964; Noel would catch the steam train from Wyong to Strathfield, where he would stay the week at a boarding house, catching the train and bus to work from there. On the weekends he'd get the steam train home.

"I still say to this day: I never went to work, I went on holidays every day, because I just loved what I did that much, from day one. Leyland was an amazing place to work; they had every nationality in the world – we even had three Eskimos working there!"

Delforce's first car was a second-hand Series II Morris Minor. The Series II was the first overhead-valve Minor, all 803cc, but it was a 'piece of rubbish' engine, Delforce says.

"But because I worked at BMC I was able to get parts at the right price. I put an 1100 Austin-Healey Sprite engine with twin 1 ¼-inch SUs, with bigger front brakes off a Morris Major Elite."

Left: Noel Delforce in his 'factory-assisted' V8 Morris Marina Sports Sedan. The engine started life as one of the Rover 3500cc V8s Leyland used in the development of the P76 V8 engine - a programme which Delforce worked on at Leyland's experimental division.

CASTROL
NOEL DELFORCE
8

Going racing

Delforce's introduction to motorsport came via Charlie Smith (a veteran of seven Bathurst 500 starts in the 1960s). He met Smith through Alan Kemp, who was the apprentice instructor at BMC.

"Charlie raced BMC vehicles," Delforce says. "He was racing an Austin Freeway at the time. Russell, my brother, would take me to the race meetings, because he was old enough to drive. He'd pick me up from Strathfield station, and we'd go to Catalina or Warwick Farm. So from an early age I was in the pits at race meetings as a crew member with Charlie Smith.

"That was my initiation, and I loved it. I made a promise to myself that I was going to do this one day. I was lucky also in that I got some good advice from Charlie."

And a bit of practical help, too. When Smith quit racing the Austin Freeway and turned it back into a road car to sell, he stripped all the performance parts out of it and gave them to Delforce.

The Freeway bits went into Noel's first competition car, a Wolseley 24/80 MkII Sports Sedan. The Wolseley 24/80 was a sister BMC model of the Freeway; Delforce bought the Wolseley as a brand-new spare bodyshell from his employer, BMC.

"It was a complete bare body with doors, bootlid and bonnet. I was able to buy it through the spare parts salvage department – for $100. They knew I was going to race it, so they knew there'd be no complications because it was never going to be registered.

"That model had the 'Blue Streak' 2.4-litre six. We bored it out to 2.7 litres using 1800 MGB pistons and rods. Merv Waggott did the cam – he basically just copied the Cooper S full race cam, and it worked fine. It had triple 1 ¾ SUs on it, using one of Charlie's old intake manifolds from the Austin Freeway."

The Detroit Locker rear end the Wolseley used

NERGOL
MOTO

Left: Wolseley 24/80s weren't exactly commonplace in Australian motorsport back in the day, but as a BMC employee Delforce was able to access a brand new 24/80 bodyshell on the cheap.
Below left: A bit of impromptu crash testing for the Wolseley's bodyshell at Amaroo Park.

> **"I said to Brocky: the car's a bit dicey over the dogleg. So he said to me, 'what are you doing?' and I described what I was doing, and he said, 'mate, don't back off. Hold it *flat*'. I said, 'you are kidding!?'"**

was also a Charlie Smith hand-me-down; it came from the MGB which Smith and Noel Hall raced (and finished sixth) in the 1967 Surfers 12 Hour.

In that late '60s/early '70s period when Sports Sedans were the staple of Oran Park, there were enough entries for two fields: Divisions 1 and 2. The Wolseley was a great car to drive, Delforce says, and certainly it was solid Div 2 performer. The first few times he raced it at Oran Park, Delforce won the track's 'encouragement award' – twice. The prize? A free haircut at Stallions Stables, which at the time featured topless hairdressers…

Delforce says that racing unlikely Sports Sedans like the Wolseley (and later Morris Marina) attracted its share of attention. It's how he came into contact with Peter Brock – who, of course, had also raced an unusual Sports Sedan, and also from the BMC stable.

"I think it was an Oran Park night meeting where I met Peter Brock," Delforce remembers. "He was really helpful to me. The fact that I started off in a Wolseley; he said, 'Noel, you're as silly as me!' 'Why is that, Pete?' I said. "Because you've started in a Wolseley and I started in an A30!' I said, 'well, at least they came from the same manufacturer,' he laughed and walked off. But then he came back, and he said to me: 'how are you handling the track?'

"I was in Division 2, and we'd just put slick tyres on it – second-hand slicks which I'd got off Leo Geoghegan – and I'm getting ready to go out for practice. I said to Brocky, 'pretty good, but the car's a bit dicey over the dogleg'. So he said to me, 'what are you doing?' and I described what I was doing, and he said, 'mate, don't back off. Hold it *flat*.' I said, 'you are kidding!?' 'Trust me', he said, 'hold it flat'. So I went out, did about four laps, and then thought, bloody hell, here goes… I held it flat and, honestly, it went across the dogleg like it was on rails! I got the fastest time in Division 2 practice, won my heat, and the first 10 finishers from each heat went into the final – and I won that too!

"The best times in motor racing in those days were back in the pits after it was all over, and you'd have a laugh with everyone. That night Brocky came and found me – I think he was more excited than me that I'd won both races! So he was quite helpful. Every time he came up to Oran Park after that he'd ask me: 'what have you done to the Wolseley, what mods have you made?'"

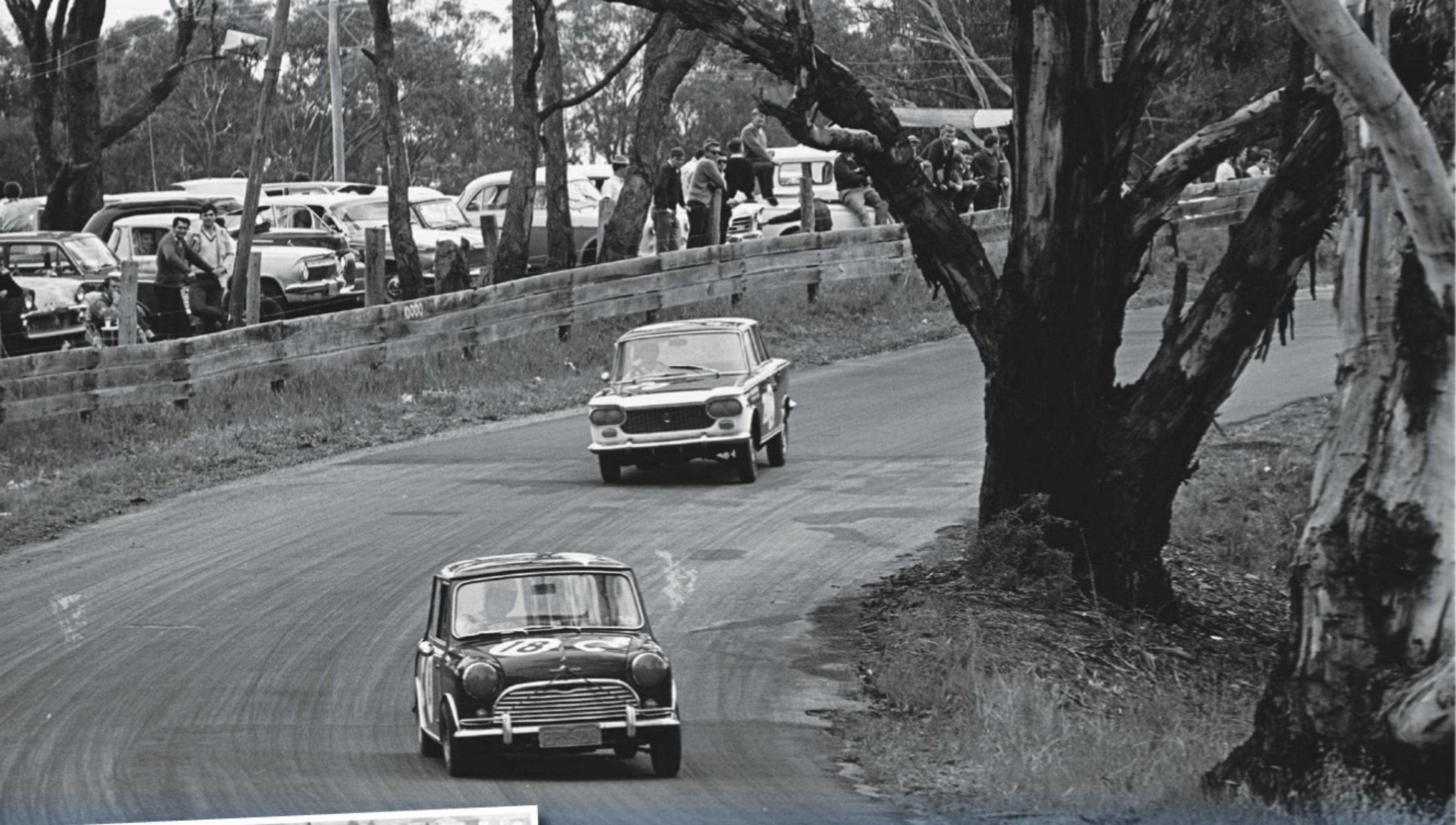
In around 1972 Delforce sold the Wolseley to Alan Springett. He helped Springett run the car, which later on included replacing the Blue Streak six with a 4.4-litre P76 V8. But the V8 conversion saw the car end up in a spot of controversy with the chief scrutineer, who at the time happened to be one H Firth.

"We had to run the exhausts out through the inner guards because there wasn't enough room with the V8," Delforce explains, "but that restricted the steering lock by about a third of what it should have been because the tie-rods were hitting the extractors.

"We turn up at Oran Park with it, and Harry Firth is the chief scrutineer. He looks at the car and says, 'I don't think you're going to be able to get around the track with that'. I said, 'no, it'll be fine,' but Harry said, 'no, we'll have to get an experienced driver to check it out'. So he went and got Kevin Bartlett to drive it. So KB does some laps in the Wolseley, and then came back into the pits and says to Harry 'it's fine, no problem at all'. I asked KB what he thought of the car and he said 'mate, this is *beautiful* to drive – and how good are the brakes?' I said, 'well actually they're just standard P76 front brakes on it', and he said, 'it just drives so well, steers so well and brakes so well.'"

That wasn't Delforce's only exchange with scrutineer Firth. Around the same time in the late '70s, Delforce was racing a Leyland P76 Sports Sedan.

"The P76 had tinted perspex side windows and rear screen, which apparently wasn't allowed. So we go through scrutineering and Harry picks this up, and says 'Noel, that's illegal, you'll have to change that'. So we did, but… several race meetings prior to that, Harry was chief scrutineer again, and he asked me if I could help him with a particular BMC workshop manual he was after – because he knew about my involvement with BMC. I said, yeah, I've got one back at my workshop – I'll bring it for you tomorrow. So I brought it in on race day and gave it to him, and he was very grateful, and then a while later he knocks me back because we've got tinted Perspex windows! So I said to myself, that's the last favour I'll do for Harry!



Bathurst

Delforce never got to race at Bathurst but he went there several times as a crew member with Charlie Smith – part of Delforce's job was to drive Charlie's race cars from Sydney to Bathurst! As a crew member he was part of two class victories and, because he was a BMC mechanic, he also got to see the Cooper S factory race operation up close.

"As I was still an apprentice in 1966, I got called up to help out on the BMC competition dept. I did spend quite a lot of time in the competition department when they needed me there when they were running the Minis at Bathurst. That would be to pull a gearbox or suspension apart, that sort of thing, but John Cotter and Terry Douglas did all the assembly, because that was their specialty.

"My brother and I prepared the Cooper S for Charlie Smith and Ron Haylen in the 1966 race *(above, car #18)*. They were leading the race but they had Pirelli Cinturato tyres, and going across the top of the mountain it blew a right-front and Ron put it on its roof, and that was the end of that. Why Charlie didn't fork out the money for proper race tyres, I don't know. Or maybe there was some deal between the BMC competition department and Dunlop not to sell Charlie tyres – because they knew Charlie was a great driver and they knew the car would be good, because Russ and I prepared it, and because we both worked at BMC we'd learned everything from the same sources as everyone in the BMC competition department. But I really don't know."

For the following year, 1967, BMC again fielded a works team, but against the new Falcon XR GT and Alfa Romeo GTVs, the Cooper S *(inset left)* was now a mere class contender. Noel and Russell Delforce prepared Charlie Smith's car, which had former winner Barry Seton as co-driver.

"They finished second in class and sixth outright. The next year Charlie had Don Holland with him, and that's where I met Don, who I'm still very good friends with today. They won class C that year, 10th outright.

"When Charlie asked Barry Seton to co-drive in '67 I was talking to Russell about little tricks you could do to try to get an advantage, because technically they were stock standard cars. I said to him, 'why don't we get the blueprints for the cylinder block and cylinder head, and go out and see Barry to see if he could see anything where we might be able to do something – because Barry was a very clever guy. So we get the blueprints from work and Russell and I go out to Barry's place at Chipping Norton on a Saturday afternoon.

"We've got them spread out on the lounge room floor. Glenn Seton is there, and he's a little kid still in nappies, crawling around on the floor all over the blueprints while we're trying to look at them. I'm thinking, thank Christ that kid's got a nappy on!

"There wasn't much you could do under the rules other than make sure everything was *right*. You'd do things like blueprint the motor and check the wheel bearing tension and those sorts of things. But those Minis were such good, reliable little cars that if you did all those things, and the driver didn't crash it, you could be fairly confident of getting through the race at Bathurst no problems."

Noel was also part of the crew on what's probably the most odd-ball entry ever in an Australian endurance race: a Mini Moke *(below)*. Making the Moke entry even more outlandish was the fact that it was in the same race as Ford GT40s and Ferrari 250LMs!).

"It was Charlie's idea to do the Surfers 12 Hour in a Moke. Barry Seton was co-driver; we put one of the Cooper S engines in it. Barry did some aerodynamic work with it with the windscreen and side panels. It was going really well, got to about 8 o'clock, two hours from the end, and the diff blew."

Marina-Rover V8

Like the Wolseley, Delforce's Morris Marina Sports Sedan was based on a brand-new shell he sourced from employer, Leyland.

"It was a bodyshell that came from the UK, and we used it to test certain things in Experimental before the cars went into production here. Then when that bodyshell wasn't needed anymore, they wanted to get rid of it, and I was able to get it through the salvage department."

It was a similar arrangement to the Wolseley: they knew he was going to race it; it wasn't going to end up as a road car. Delforce had paid the princely sum of $100 for the Wolseley shell, but he can't remember what the bill for the Marina body was. It's possible that it may even just been have given it to him…

The car was built into a Sports Sedan with the help of Roy Cullen, who worked alongside Delforce in the fabrication section of the Experimental department.

"There's never been a better fabricator put on earth than Roy," Delforce asserts. "He did all the fabrication work on the car."

This included going to the trouble of lengthening the little British coupe's wheelbase by 75mm. However, this was one of the few modifications that *wasn't* allowed in Sports Sedans back then. Delforce says they made sure that whenever the car was parked in the pits, the front wheels were on full lock so it looked less obvious.

"Years later I said to [Oran Park promoter] Allan Horsley, 'I've got a confession to make…' He said: 'I knew I should have gone down there with a tape measure!'"

In reality, Horsley viewed the Marina V8 as bit of a drawcard for his flagship Toby Lee Sports Sedan Series in 1973/74 – simply because it was *different*, as Delforce explains: "Horsley said to me, 'Noel, back then if you'd have put the bite on me for appearance money, I'd have seriously considered it'."

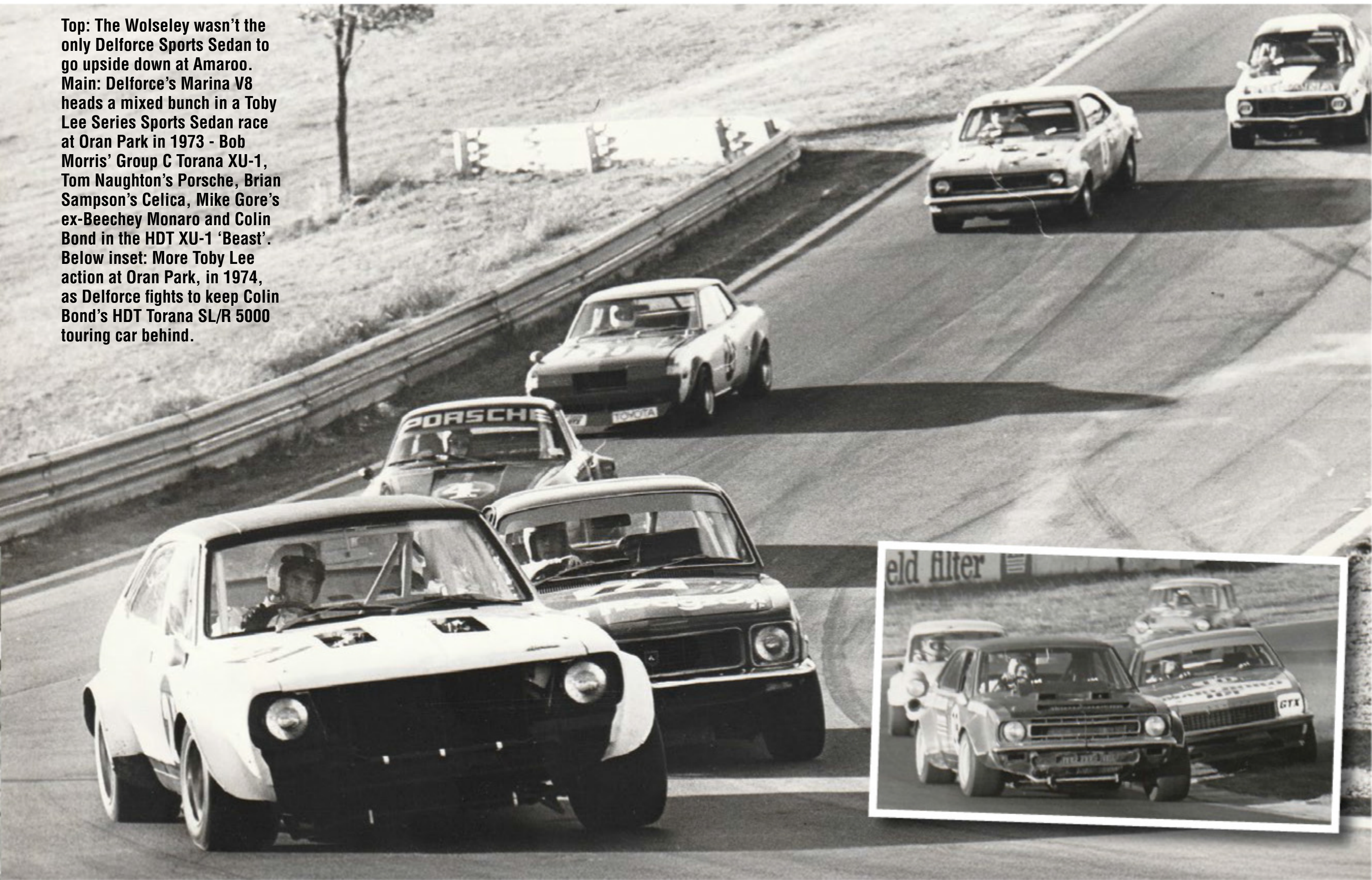
Like the Wolseley before it, the Marina retained plenty of Leyland/BMC components. The original Marina torsion bar front end was discarded and replaced with MGB front suspension. The Rover V8 engine wasn't moved back in the chassis, as was general practice in Sports Sedans, and only slight modifications were needed to the inner guards to make it fit.

The engine was a modified version of the classic 3500cc Rover V8. It was a rather special engine. It was among the pool of engines Leyland had sourced from the British Leyland UK head office during the development of the 4.4-litre P76 V8 engine – in which Delforce himself was directly involved.

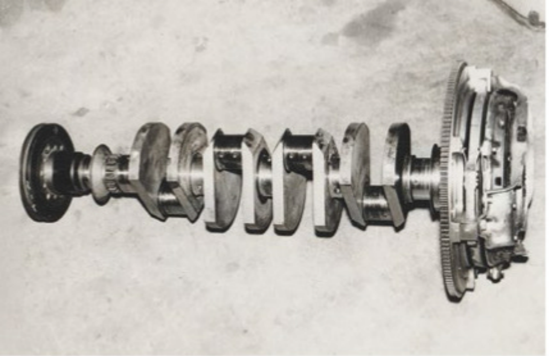
"The short engine they [Leyland] gave me was a brand new 3500 Rover. The thing was that the Rover engines we'd used as part of the P76 V8 engine development weren't needed anymore, so they were given to me for the Marina.

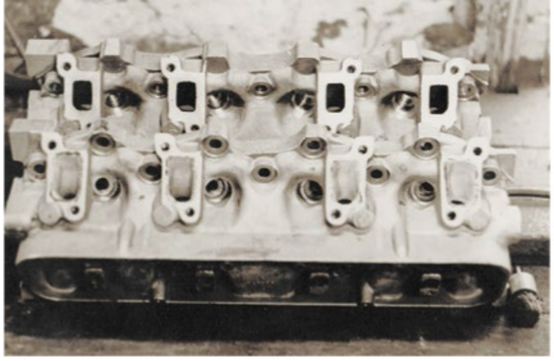
"Basically they said, 'Noel, whatever other bits you need, just grab them and use them'. Because by then we'd got to the point where the P76 V8 engine development was in proper P76 form, with proper cranks etc. The blocks had been machined at the Lithgow small arms factory; a lot of the other machining and work on the P76 engine development had been done for us by Lynx Engineering."

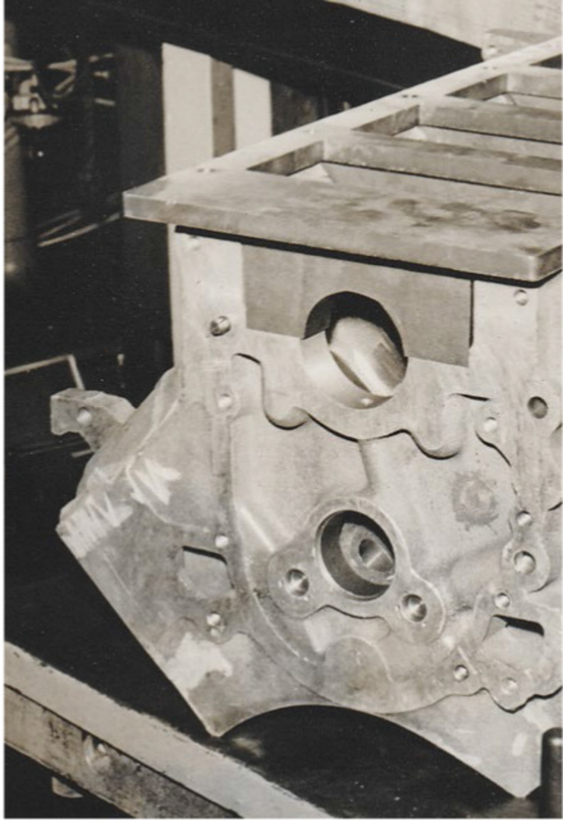
Noel had a handy contact at Lynx, because



Top: The Wolseley wasn't the only Delforce Sports Sedan to go upside down at Amaroo. Main: Delforce's Marina V8 heads a mixed bunch in a Toby Lee Series Sports Sedan race at Oran Park in 1973 - Bob Morris' Group C Torana XU-1, Tom Naughton's Porsche, Brian Sampson's Celica, Mike Gore's ex-Beechey Monaro and Colin Bond in the HDT XU-1 'Beast'. Below inset: More Toby Lee action at Oran Park, in 1974, as Delforce fights to keep Colin Bond's HDT Torana SL/R 5000 touring car behind.







Detail shots showing Leyland's experimental flat-plane crank (top left) used in the Marina, plus Lynx Engineering's cylinder head work and steel girdle to strengthen the block around the main bearings as the 3.5-litre Rover V8 was stretched to 4.7. Lynx Engineering had also did some of the machining work for Leyland during the development of the P76 V8 road car engine.

by then his brother had left Leyland to join Lynx. Russell Delforce had been involved in Lynx's work for Leyland with the P76 V8 engine project.

"With the P76 engine programme," Noel continues, "we'd also been experimenting in Experimental with lots of different bits we'd got from Repco: single-plane cranks, one-piece steel single-plane cranks with a longer stroke that increased the capacity from 3.5 litres to 4.2 litres, while still at the standard 3.5-inch bore. I got two of those cranks because they were 'so-called' chucking them out, and I built the first engine for the Marina with one of those."

Lynx Engineering was heavily involved with the Marina Sports Sedan's 4.2-litre Rover V8-based engine. Lynx did all the balancing and machining, and made up a special rear main seal arrangement to suit the steel crank. Lynx also did the cylinder heads, flow benching and then porting and polishing them in its specially equipped cylinder head room, as well as supplying the Dellorto carbies for the engine (Lynx Engineering was the Australian Dellorto distributor).

"Lynx also made up a steel girdle bolted onto the sump face to support the main bearing caps," Delforce adds, "and being it was a single-plane crank, we needed do a new cam profile. The camshaft was hand-made by Merv Waggott so it had the right timing characteristics to suit the single plane – once again we just copied the Cooper S full race cam, and it worked fine.

"Early on with that car, I blew a piston," Delforce says. "John Bruderlin, the managing director of Lynx Engineering, who honestly was one of the cleverest guys around, had a look and said to me, 'Noel, we're going to bore it. Those pistons are no good, and you can't get forged pistons in that size, so we're going to bore it to take a forged piston'.

"So that took it out to 4.7 litres. It ended up being a really good, reliable engine."

One of the perks of working for a car manufacturer was access to an engine dyno. With permission to use Leyland's dyno room, Delforce took the opportunity to dyno the Marina engine after hours on his own time.

"I think it had 380 horsepower and something like 420 ft/lb of torque. That was corrected horsepower, too; in those days we used to correct the figures to atmospheric conditions. At Leyland we had barometers and thermometers and all sorts of things measuring different aspects of the climate on the day you were dynoing – and then we used to work out all the figures on a slide rule. No calculators back then; it was all done with a slide rule. Ask me to use a slide rule today and I'd have no idea…

"And didn't that show up in the car – the thing was absolute jet down the straight with that engine!

"One day I'm out there with it at Oran Park in practice for a Toby Lee Sports Sedan Series round, and I see Leo Geoghegan in the rearview mirror in the 911 Porsche. So I thought, 'I'll back off and let Leo past me, and then tag on behind him and maybe learn a thing or two, and then I might be able to keep up with him. So I go to the inside of the track on the straight, so I'm not in the way, and lift off to about a third throttle and wave him past. But he didn't pass me.

"In the pits afterwards he comes up to me: 'Noel, what was all that on the straight, what were you doing waving at me?' I said, 'Leo, I thought I'd let you past and tag on behind and I might learn something,' and he said, 'Noel, I was *flat out* on the straight, and I couldn't catch you!' We had a bit of a laugh about that."

The Marina was never a front runner against top (and more expensive) Sports Sedans of the day like the Formula 5000-based John McCormack Valiant Charger and Bryan Thomson's VW Chev 'Volksrolet'. But it was fast enough to be a Division 1 contender, and therefore qualify for the rich Toby Lee Sports Sedan Series.

Delforce and Roy Cullen may have stretched the wheelbase on the Marina, but even with that extra 75mm the car's short length was its Achilles Heel.

"The Marina was difficult to drive," Delforce says. "Very twitchy with its short wheelbase and wide track – the track was almost as wide as the wheelbase. With all that power, it just wanted to

> **"In the pits afterwards Leo comes up to me: 'Noel, what was all that on the straight, what were you doing waving at me?' I said, 'Leo, I thought I'd let you past and tag on behind and I might learn something,' and he said, 'Noel, I was *flat out* on the straight, and I couldn't catch you!' We had a bit of a laugh about that."**

MARSDEN
GTX
GTX

go sideways every time you touched the throttle – which was fun, but it wasn't fast. It was a beast of a thing to drive, it really was – but I wouldn't have missed it for the world…"

These days Delforce is good mates with Don Holland. It's a friendship that goes back to the '60s when Delforce and his brother crewed for Charlie Smith, and Holland was Smith's Bathurst co-driver (in 1968). During the Marina period, Delforce asked Holland to try the car to see if something could be done to make it handle better.

"I was out at Oran Park with it one day doing private practice, and Leo Geoghegan and Don Holland were there as well. I asked Don to take it out for a few laps to see what he thought; he came back to the pits and said, 'Noel, it's got me – I can't do any better than you in it.' I went up to Leo and said, 'could you do a few laps in the Marina for me because I'm having trouble driving it.' 'Sure', he says; he gets in it and does about eight or nine laps and comes back in and says, 'Noel, you're a very brave boy!'"

TOR
GRACE BROS
TAA
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BRAKES
MARINA
LEYLAND
ST GEORGE-PORT HACKING AUTOMOBILE CLUB
HARDIE-FERODO 1000
Castrol
BYERS
MOLESWORTH
Motorcraft
34
GTX

"Neil had steel 20-litre fuel drums with a nozzle, but no breather. So during the race we had to tip it upside down and put it in the car, and as the fuel starts to flow someone else would whack the bottom of the drum with a pick hammer to put a big hole in it, and that was the breather. Well… when the fire marshals saw it, they almost had a heart attack!"

Morris Marina at Bathurst

In 1974 Neil Byers hatched a plan to race a Morris Marina in the Bathurst 1000. Given that Delforce worked as a mechanic in the factory that made the Marinas, he was the obvious choice as co-driver.

"Working in the factory was the right place to be," Delforce says, "because I could watch the body right from being spot-welded together on the assembly line. Roy Cullen made up some extra stiff brackets and things to go in all the appropriate places, the suspension areas and around the windscreen. Because they had a six-cylinder engine, they had a really bad flexing problem around the windscreen, but Roy was able to stiffen up that area by spot welding stiffer brackets while the body was being made. It didn't get any proof coating, so that saved some weight.

"Neil was there to pick it up, and took it away to get painted. He did most of the mechanical work but I did the engine – again, at work, like I'd done with the Sports Sedan. You couldn't do much with them because under the rules you had to run the standard inlet manifold, and same size valves.

"They came standard with a 1 ¾ SU, and on the dyno at work previously in Experimental we'd played around with 2-inch SUs on them. So we put a 2-inch SU on it with a mild cam, and Lynx balanced the engine."

But the plan hit an unexpected snag when their entry was rejected by the race organiser, the ARDC. Delforce explains:

"Fred Pearce was an ARDC stalwart and clerk of the course at Amaroo and Bathurst in 1974. I'd had a few run-ins with him at Amaroo after different things I'd done in the Marina Sports Sedan – passing under yellows, maybe, I don't remember. One day I'm up there and he's given me an earful and was going to fine me, and I just walked out. I turned around and said, 'Fred, you're nothing but a dickhead!'.

"Wrong thing to say! When Fred Pearce saw my name on the entry form, he told Neil he wouldn't accept the entry if Noel Delforce was co-driver."

Delforce still went to Bathurst, but as pit crew rather than driver.

"They didn't do anything spectacular but they did finish the race. The issue we had was: because of the altitude change up the mountain, the SU was running too rich across the top, but I hadn't taken any SU carby needles with me so we just had to put up with it.

"Neil had sorted out the fuel drums for the refuelling, and what he had were steel 20-litre drums with a nozzle, but no breather. So during the race what we had to do was tip it up and put it in the car, and as the fuel starts to flow someone else would whack the bottom of the drum with a pick hammer to put a big hole in it, and that was the breather – and then the fuel would just rush into the tank.

"Well… when the fire marshals saw it, they almost had a heart attack! But they were right – one spark from the pick hammer striking the steel drum and the whole thing would have gone up in flames! The fire marshal who got upset about it happened to be one of the ex-Leyland employees, and I actually knew him from back at BMC…"

MARINA
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BP
GOODYEAR
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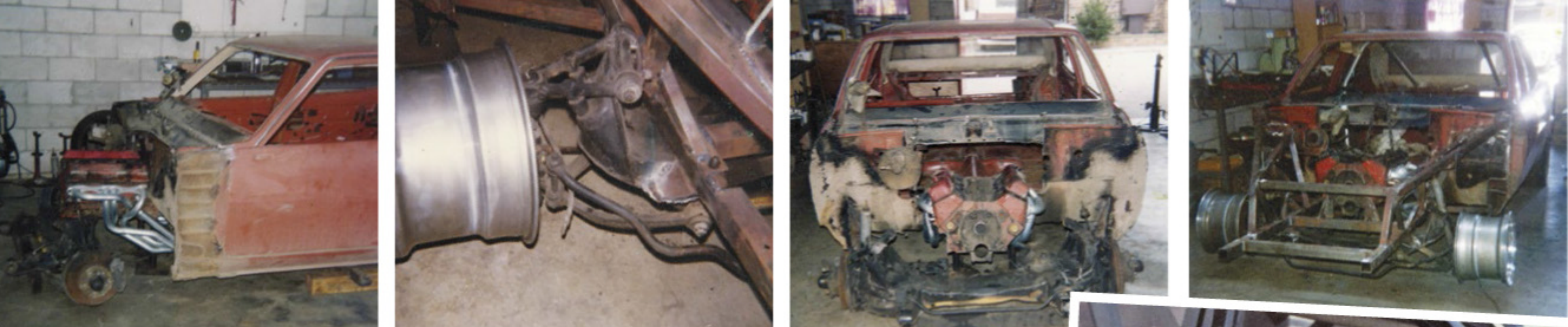


Top: P76 Sports Sedan under construction. It was powered by a mid-mounted 307 Chev, later upgraded to a 350. Right: At Oran Park heading Alan Browne's ReCar Torana A9X touring car. Below: Clashing with Allan Moffat at Oran Park.

P76 Sports Sedan

In the late '70s Delforce decided to get back into racing. He told his old fabricator mate (and fellow Leyland 'refugee'), Roy Cullen of his plan to build a new Sports Sedan. By that time Cullen had moved to Canberra and was working for GIO Insurance.

"I said to him one day, 'Roy, I'd love to do a P76 Sports Sedan'. Then not too long after that he rings me and tells me he's just had to do an insurance quote on a P76 that's had a big front-end prang, and is a write off. He said, do you want it?

"So I ended up buying it really cheap, and Roy helped me build it at my workshop at Moorebank. Because the front end was so badly damaged, Roy basically cut the front off at the windscreen and we built a space frame section to bolt up to the firewall.

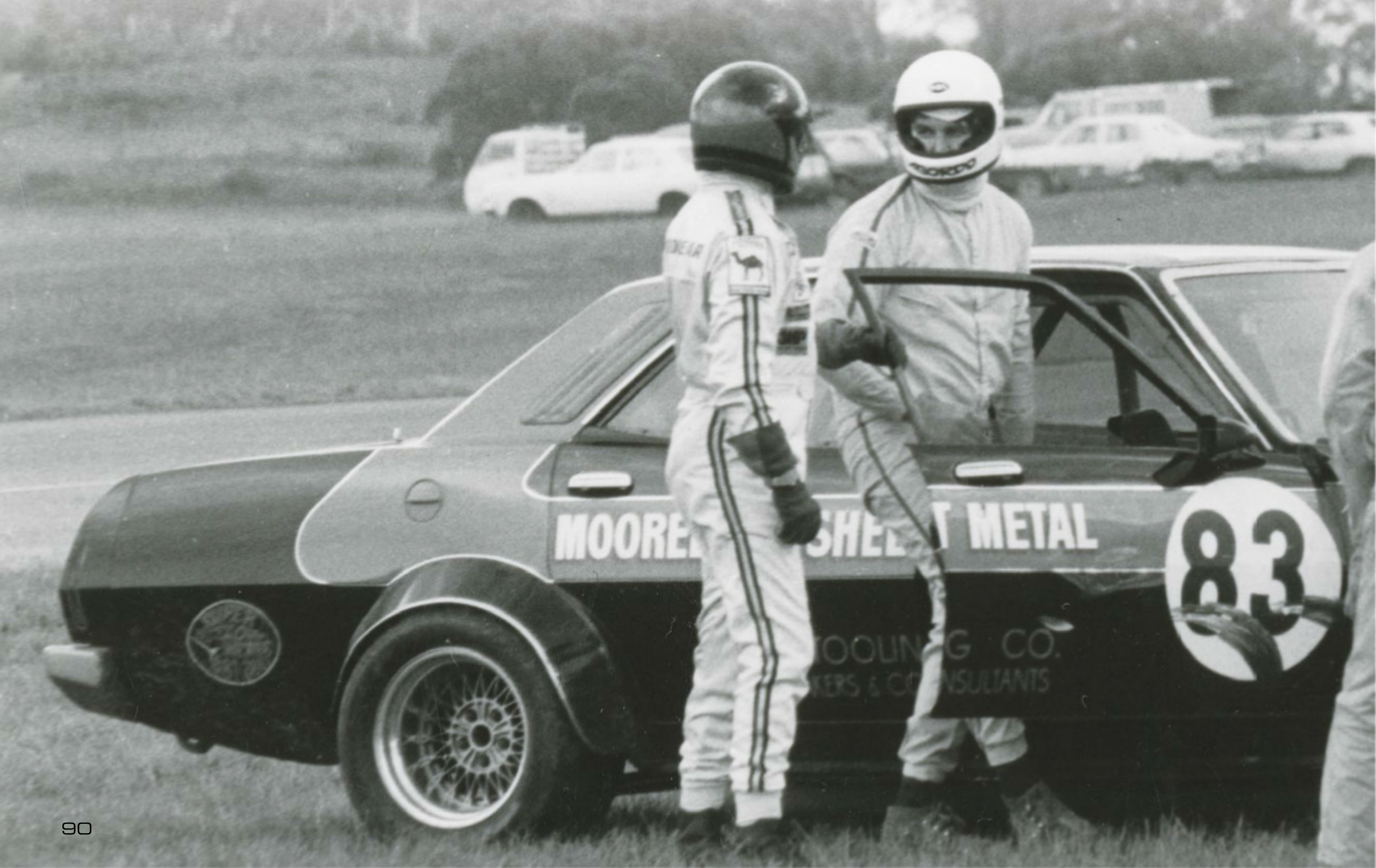
"We put a 307 Chev in it, mounted a fair way back inside the cabin. We swapped that for a 350 towards the end of its life.

"It had the P76 Borg Warner single-rail four-speed gearbox in it – that gearbox had come from Leyland Experimental. It had a nine-inch Ford diff with the Detriot Locker. Lots of people didn't like driving with a Detroit Locker because they were either locked or they're not, but Charlie Smith gave me all the clues on that, and I really enjoyed driving with a Detroit Locker – which I had in the Wolseley, Marina and P76.

"The car stopped well; it had big Jaguar XJ12 rotors with bigger calipers on the front, and XJ6 discs on the back. It was actually a really sweet car to drive. We ran it for a few years, I won a few races in it and had a lot of fun, and stirred a few people up."

Those people included Allan Moffat, who clashed with the P76 driver in a Sports Sedan race at Oran Park in 1980. The occasion was, for Moffat, quite significant: his first race start in a 13B peripheral port-engined Mazda RX7. This was at a time when Moffat was lobbying to have the 13B-powered RX7 accepted as a Group

> "Moffat's hitting me, trying to move me across to the right. I just thought, 'stuff you mate', and I've gone 'whack!' into the side of him, and then we got tangled up and both went off. The race went on but we were both stopped, and Moffat couldn't get out of his car because my car was jammed up against his door."



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C touring car, and so Moffat's appearance in the Allan Bryant-owned machine in the Sports Sedan races was a demonstration of what to expect from such a car (putting Moffat in the RX7 was also a canny ploy to get more punters through the turnstyles from Oran Park promoter Allan Horsley – who was later to mastermind Moffat's RX7 touring car race effort!).

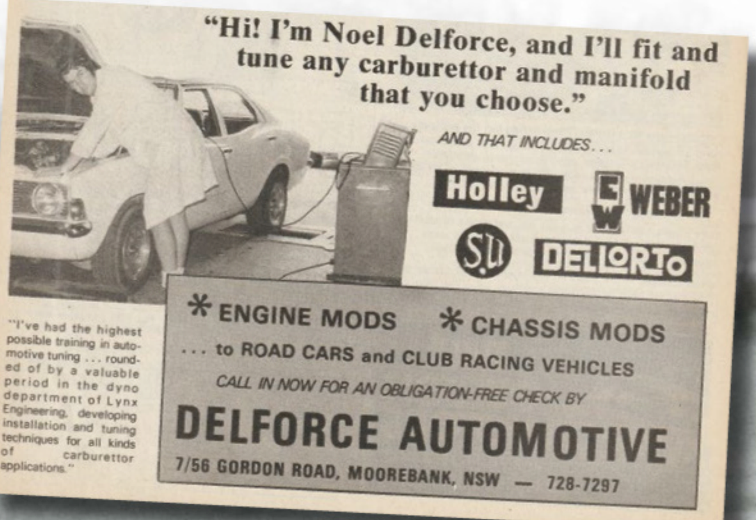
But Moffat's celebrated first race weekend in an RX7 did not go to script. In the feature race, he was out before they reached the first corner – as Delforce, who was also in the race, explains:

"We've taken off at the start, and there was David Seldon in his Gemini on the outside into the kink, and he's gone off and is doing an end-for-end. So all the guys on that side of the track are trying to get across to the left to avoid the accident. Moffat's on my left, and he's wanting more room for the first [left-hand] corner, so he's given the P76 a few taps on the side. I look across at him and he's hitting me again, trying to move me across to the right.

"I just thought, 'stuff you mate', and I've gone 'whack!' into the side of him, and then we got tangled up and both went off. The race went on but we were both stopped, and Moffat couldn't get out of his car because my car was jammed up against his door. So he climbed out through the window and then walked across my bonnet, which was aluminium, so he's crushed all the bonnet up near the windscreen. He got fined $100 for that – a fair sum back then – and then when he didn't turn up at the Stewards' meeting they fined him another $100!"

Racing Car News reported that 'tempers were frayed' after the incident; when interviewed by the course commentators Moffat described the P76 as 'the Queen Mary'.

"They interviewed me afterwards," Delforce says, "and I said 'I prefer to call it an RX7 Destroyer!'"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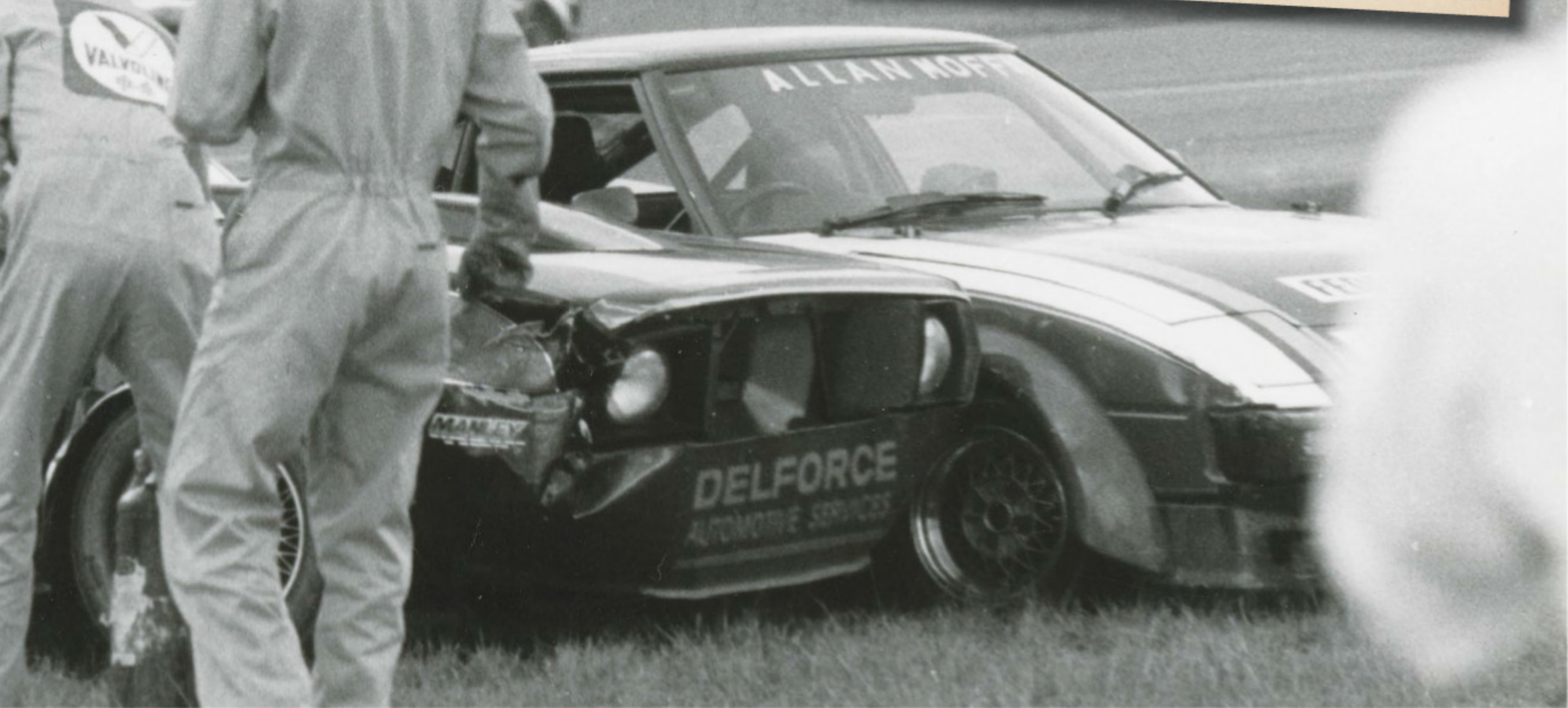

LEYLAND P76
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Above: Noel Delforce today is still active in Leyland car club circles and is the go-to man for Leyland P76 owners. Below: Delforce had been about to start building a Leyland Force 7 Sports Sedan racer when the announcement came that his employer, Leyland Australia, would be shutting down.

Force 7 Sports Sedan?

Delforce told *AMC* that if Leyland Australia hadn't closed its doors, his next Sports Sedan after the V8 Marina was going to be a P76 Force 7 (using the Marina's mechanicals). The Force 7 was the two-door version of the P76 that was about to go into production when the decision was taken to shut the company down.

"I actually had already organised to have aluminium sheeting delivered through the orders dept, and I was going to press the front guards, rear hatch, bonnet and doors in aluminium. It was all teed up with a couple of mates in the press shop to do it one weekend."

But that plan came to an abrupt end, as Delforce explains:

"I was away on the Southern Cross Rally in Port Macquarie, crewing for Evan Green and Roy Denny in a P76. It was the second night of the rally, and we're sitting around having dinner – Roy Cullen was there with us too. Anyway, Evan came down and said 'guys, you don't have to hurry back to the factory – they're closing it down'. My first thought was, 'bloody hell, all that aluminium sheeting we've got ordered, we're not going to be able to use it!'

"We found out *that* quickly, that it was over."

The Leyland factory closed in November, 1974. Delforce decided to strip the Marina down and sell off the bits. The engine went into a (racing) sports car; the body was sold to Neil Byers.

"Neil put a Chev V8 in it – and went two seconds a lap slower than I'd been in it with the Rover engine. He raced it for a while and then stopped. I tried to buy it back from him; he didn't want to sell it, and eventually it went to God, rusting in a paddock.

"My severance pay was $17,700, which was quite a bit of money back then. I found a block of land at Moorebank and bought that.

"Just before BMC shut down they'd done a pre-production run of 53 Force 7s. When they closed the factory, there were 10 Force 7s that survived. They stripped the other 43 and crushed the bodies. I saw all that happen; it was terrible to watch.

"Anyway, they called me up to the PR office and said 'Noel, you've been a model employee, we've enjoyed your racing, we're going to offer you a Force 7 for $3000. I went home and thought about it, but I was already committed to the block of land – using the severance pay from Leyland. I went back the next day and thanked them for the offer but that I was buying the block of land, and they said, 'OK, but you've made the wrong decision'.

"If I'd bought it, I wouldn't have kept it this long; I probably would have moved it on after a couple of years. But having said that, a Force 7 changed hands recently in the [P76] club for $250,000… All you get from looking back is a sore neck."

> **"When they closed the factory, there were 10 Force 7s that survived. They stripped the other 43 and crushed the bodies. I saw all that happen; it was terrible to watch."**

NSW
FORCE7
Force 7V

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PODCAST

The Australian MUSCLE CAR Magazine Podcast is a place for all the yarns that didn't fit between the pages. Hear from the heroes behind the wheel and the legends behind the scenes, from a golden era of Australian motoring.

Episode 1
Allan Grice
Gricey discusses everything from NASCAR and his biggest shunts, to being Australia's fastest pastry cook...and as usual, Gricey leaves it all on the track.

Episode 2
Kevin Bartlett
One of the most versatile racing drivers in Australian motorsport history. From rally to Grand Prix, open wheelers to touring cars, "KB" has done it all and lived to tell the tale.

Episode 3
Garry Wilkinson
Broadcasting and motorsport legend Garry Wilkinson shares what went on behind the scenes and behind the cameras during some legendary years of the Great Race.

Episode 4
John "Stonie" Stoneham
Australia's favourite cartoonist has got a whole lot of stories from his time in the paddock. From the Adelaide Speedway to the world of F1, usually with a pen in hand.

Episode 5
Colin Bond (Part 1)
There aren't many, or ANY, Australian racing drivers with the resume of Colin Bond. From tarmac to gravel, he made his mark and won on all surfaces.

Episode 6
Colin Bond (Part 2)
Strap yourself back in for part two of MUSCLE CAR Magazine's far-reaching conversation with Colin Bond, this time diving deeper into his rallying career.

Episode 7
Paul "Wally" Weissel
As long-time PR man for the legendary HRT, Wally Weissel spent many years working alongside drivers such as Peter Brock, Craig Lowndes and Mark Skaife.

Episode 8
Sue Ransom
From rallying to circuit racing. Top Fuel drags to Funny Cars, Sue has lived a life on the edge competing in both Australia and the US across a myriad of disciplines.

Episode 9
The AMC Editors
In this unique episode, the founder of AMC magazine Ray 'Bergie' Berghouse interviews the three people to have edited Australian Muscle Car magazine.

Episode 10
Spencer Martin
Spencer Martin has a long and storied career behind the wheel, piloting everything from the stunning Ferrari 250LM in the mid '60s to a Volvo 242 GT.

Episode 11
John Smith
The openwheeler star who in the early '80s matched it in identical equipment with current F1 drivers and is widely regarded as one of our best-ever in single seaters.

Episode 12
Phil Christensen & Peter McKay
'Retired' journos Phil & Peter relieve their memories of racing, drivers, cars, overseas trips along with numerous controversies that will keep you entertained and enlightened!

Episode 13
Warwick Brown
Warwick's race-winning record is second to none in the fearsome Formula 5000 era! And if an F5000 isn't a real Muscle Car then what is?

Episode 14
Forbes and Moore (Part 1)
We talk to these privateer racers who are not only both 'characters' of the most interesting kind, but were both without doubt 'the best of the rest' in the Torana-era!

Episode 15
Forbes and Moore (Part 2)
As their careers behind the wheel began to wind down, both men would go on to become movers and shakers in the sport behind the scenes.

Episode 16
Wally Storey (Part 1)
Meet Wally Storey – racing car designer and constructor, test driver and race engineer, and the man who masterminded Holden's shock 1990 Bathurst win.

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Slot car addiction

with Brett Jurmann

Grand Prix collecting

A recent trip to the Australian Scalextric Racing & Collecting Club's Hornsby swap meet brought to my attention the collectability of Formula 1 cars. A chat with some of the club members highlighted that some of the most collectable slot cars are the older open-wheeler cars they remember from their childhood.

In fact, Scalextric and other manufacturers have been tapping into the nostalgia boom and reinventing the slot car market once again. Recent product releases have been targeting those childhood memories, such as TV shows we watched as children and Scalextric cars we played with. It is a courageous move as some of these new models do not have the option of multiple historic liveries.

Nevertheless, historic F1 cars are making a comeback, so I thought I would take a look at old and new releases to see what might be collectable. My starting point were some of the reference books by Roger Gillham that outline the history of Scalextric releases. These books detail the history of the brand, the release types through the years and in particular, what is collectable.

Gillham points out that collectability comes in many forms, including the childhood memories associated with the old classics like the James Bond cars. It also can be from the view of rarity, and he highlights the red Bugatti and blue Auto Union from early Scalextric sets. Foreign production such as France, Spain or even our own Australian-only release cars can also be highly prized. The same goes for limited releases commissioned by Scalextric clubs around the world.

These are probably not to my taste, but the attraction depends on what you consider worthwhile. Certainly, older and rarer cars are not likely to see many racing laps once in the hands of collectors. They will likely be poor performers without substantial modification, or otherwise, racing crashes may devalue them with damaged paintwork or parts.

Arguably, one of the rarest Scalextric cars is the Senna McLaren MP4. The story goes that the Spanish company (Exin) that owned the rights to the Scalextric name in Spain made a nice looking MP4/4 in a Prost livery. The Spanish MP4/4's livery featured decals and it was devoid of the red and white Marlboro cigarette branding closely associated with McLaren for several decades, being replaced by 'McLaren' wording. It was a good-looking model and a reasonable performer. Released along with the company's Ferrari F1/87 the new Formula 1 cars were popular with club racers.

The relationship between the Spanish and British brands has usually been separate. The Francoist government of Spain prevented any sales unless the seller was 60 percent Spanish-owned. Scalextric of Spain (owned by Exin) was set up to manufacture and sell Scalextric

McLaren
12
SHOWA

$90
$10
$80
$80
$70

TINPLATE MASERATI 250F
SCALEXTRIC

products in Spain. But there were periods of co-operation a few decades ago, where the two Scalextric would apparently share body moulds. Exin would use UK bodies with their own running gear to manufacture some of the British models. Similarly in the 1970s, some Spanish models appeared in the UK Scalextric catalogue fitted with UK engines, guides, wheels and tyres. A good example of this is the collectible Scalextric C48 version of the Tyrrell 001.

The same arrangement was supposed to happen with this new Spanish MP4/4. The McLaren bodies were improved for the UK market with tampo printing and the car was announced in the Scalextric catalogue. Then it vanished. One version of events is that Exin had been a bit cavalier with copyright and had not bothered to ask permission from McLaren to use their name. You can imagine how Ron Dennis might have reacted to that situation. Needless to say, Scalextric UK never sold the car, and Exin rebranded the body in different fictitious liveries as 'Indy' cars.

Some period later, large numbers of the UK Scalextric MP4/4s surfaced around the UK. One Scottish dealer had more than a hundred of them for sale at a Milton Keynes swapmeet the following spring. Someone must have accidentally left the backdoor unlocked at Scalextric headquarters. A car never actually sold by Scalextric is indeed going to be rare.

More recently has come the move towards an expanding range of new F1 releases that should make the young at heart happy. The start of this trend was possibly marked by the tinplate sets that reproduced the early Ferraris, Maseratis and Vanwalls of the original Scalextric track sets of the '50s. Along parallel lines, Spanish manufacturers such as SCX and Fly were producing some excellent F1 bodies such as the BRM, McLaren, Williams and March in the late 1990s. Even though the bodies were a godsend, some quality issues let the product down from time to time and the bulging rear transaxles that hid rear gears were an annoying feature.

Fast-forward to today and Formula 1 cars are making a comeback in slot racing production, no doubt helped along by the miniaturisation of gear sets. You may recall in my interview with Mauricio Ferrari in *AMC#142*, where he said Slot.It would not have made Formula 1 cars without the special gear set-up initiated by Andy Rowland. This is arguably the best example of how manufacturers are improving the accuracy of Grand Prix cars. As a result, the new cars of today are hard to fault in terms of both scale and drivability.

Coming out of the new wave of nostalgia and the improvement to driveline miniaturisation is the upcoming Legends box set from Scalextric. Titled 'Monte Carlo Grand Prix', it will feature the Jim Clark Lotus 25 and Graham Hill's BRM P57 from the 1963 Monaco Grand Prix. These cars have never been made with such scale accuracy, so they will be a delight to see racing around scale versions of the famous street circuit.

Ultimately any collection of Grand Prix car you decide to have, is entirely up to you. The key here is to have a theme. Ask yourself if it is about rarity - are you searching for 'Eleanors'? Do you want every Ferrari Grand Prix car? Do you want an Ayrton Senna collection? A great way to start is to get yourself along to a swap meet near you. It is a great chance to see some rarities, and to talk with fellow enthusiast about what is out there. The Scalextric Club is hosting its next one at Sydney Motorsport Park on August 3.

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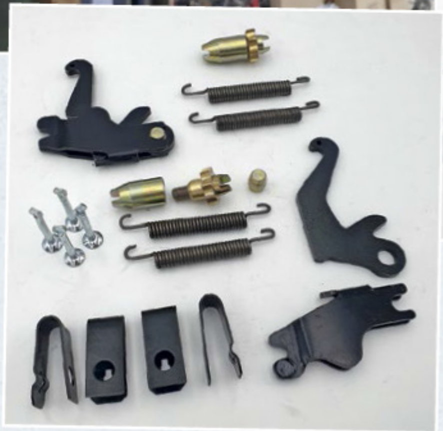

Hoppers Stoppers

Putting the brakes on your classic

While the team at Hoppers Stoppers has always maintained and offered their Holden specific brake upgrades for many years now, they've also undertaken efforts to have as much as they possibly can reproduced/remanufactured for differing applications in mind.

Their decisions were based on the lack of available 'used' items around to fit demand for rear kits to suit HQ-WB Holdens and Toranas and essentially any diff setup for 'commodore rear brakes'.

Now, through their suppliers, Hoppers have started the process of having the entirety of the rear brake system from the VB-VS Commodores made again.

So far they've remade the handbrake hardware components and the 'standard' rear brake calipers – and recently, the SV5000/HSV Group A VN-VP rear caliper to suit the vented rotor upgrade of that era as well.

They're also looking to reproduce the handbrake backing plate to open up more options for larger rear brake upgrades as well down the track.

Hoopers have also sourced reproduction Corvette calipers in limited quantities to complement these rear caliper options. These have re-ignited brake upgrades for VP to as late as VY brake upgrades with the C4 and C5/C6 variants as well as re-opening options that they've produced in the past for the likes of HQ-WB Holdens with kits utilising 330mm to 355mm diameter rotors.

For more information, photos and pricing on these options, contact Hoppers Stoppers – Email your enquiries to… enquiries@hoppers.com.au or call 03 9748 6950.

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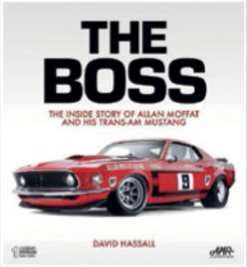

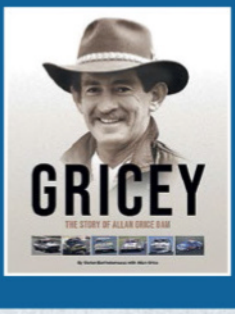

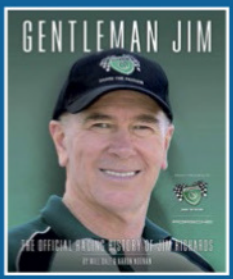

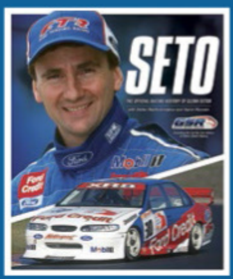

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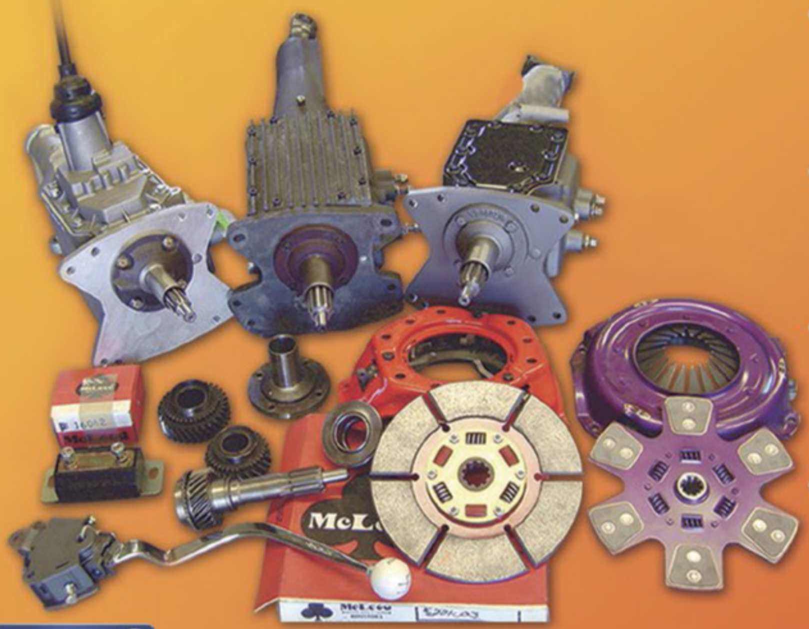

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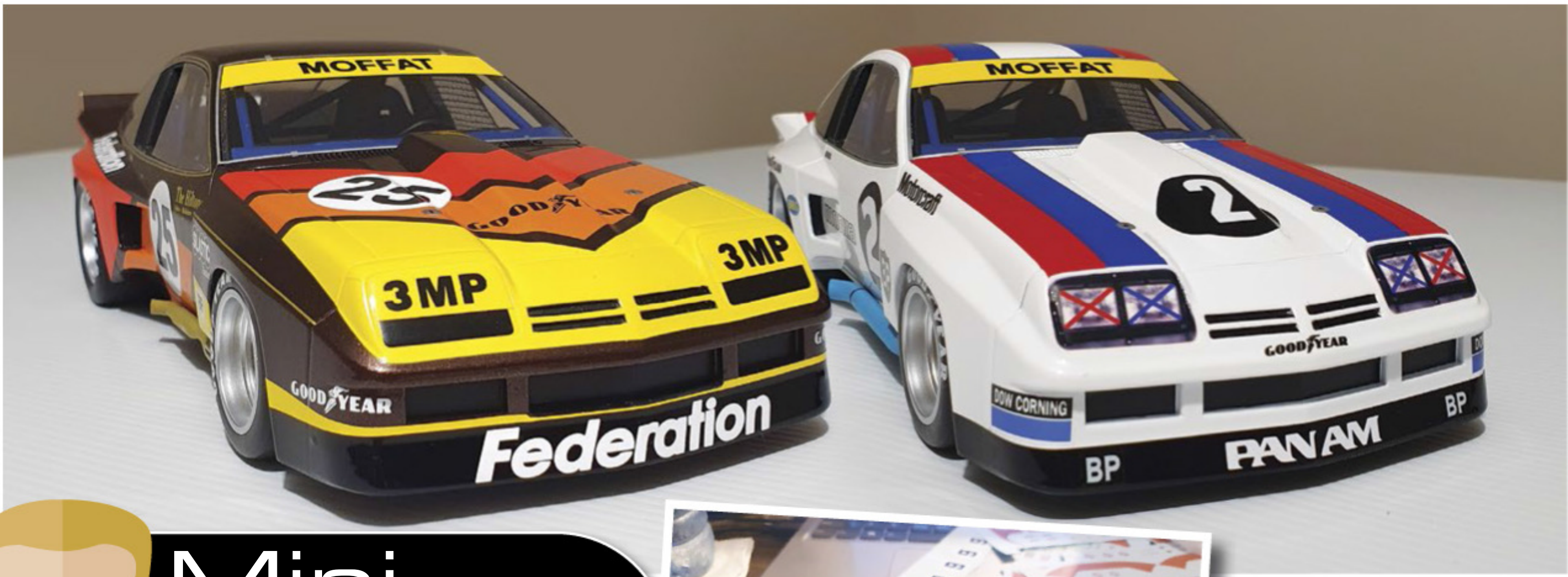


Mini Muscle

with Bruce Moxon

Here we go again with the GT-40s. I got two Ford GT-40 kits a couple of years ago from my mate, Glen, who said he 'was never going to get to them'. One was branded IMC and the other Testors, both brands now part of Revell. If you didn't see issue #146, there's more detail there.

Suffice it to say that the kit, a very old one, gave me some grief – parts didn't fit, the instructions were unclear at times and the parts weren't numbered in all cases.

Well, this is basically the same kit, but with slightly different body parts representing a later model. I built this one as a 1968 John Wyer/Gulf car, the Paul Hawkins/David Hobbs car that retired after 107 laps with engine trouble.

Not only is it the same kit, but it had much the same drama with parts not fitting and so on. Also, I got the shade of blue a bit wrong! The decals had gone off in a big way, so these are from Patto's Place and they didn't like the paint, not one little bit. You can see the orange stripe on the roof has lifted in places.

While this build didn't go too much better than the first one, it's done. Now, a recent experience leads me to wonder if the fit problem might not be all the fault of the manufacturer. I built and older Tamiya kit that had been in storage for a couple of decades and met some of the same problems. Seems that if you just put these kits in a shed or a garage, changes in temperature can cause the parts to warp. Even a Tamiya kit can have problems in this case.

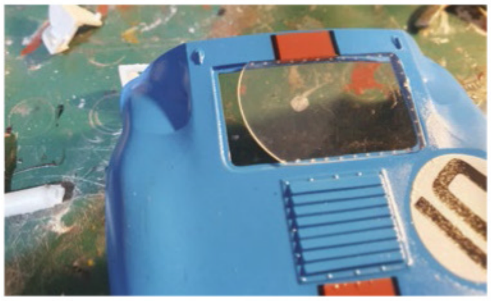
And because I'm a glutton for punishment, I bought a new GT-40 kit, the Revell one from Germany. It's a newer mould – only quite recent, actually, so at some stage we'll get onto that and see of the dramas are in the past.

Meanwhile, our old mate Geoff Wood has been making other kit-builders and modifiers look ordinary. This time, he's taken three of the quite expensive Monzas from RAR and worked his magic on them. You might remember Geoff is very good friends with Allan Moffat and these models were a labour of love for him.

Geoff takes up the story:

"I thought I'd send through a selection of images from my latest project, Allan's iconic DeKon Chevrolet Monza in 1:18 scale in three iconic liveries.

"They've been a long time coming, as I had



10
10
FORD GT-40

SMS
AUTO
CANDY APPLE RED
SMS
AUTO
BARBADOS GREEN
SMS
AUTO
FORD ELECTRIC BLUE

AIRBRUSH READY
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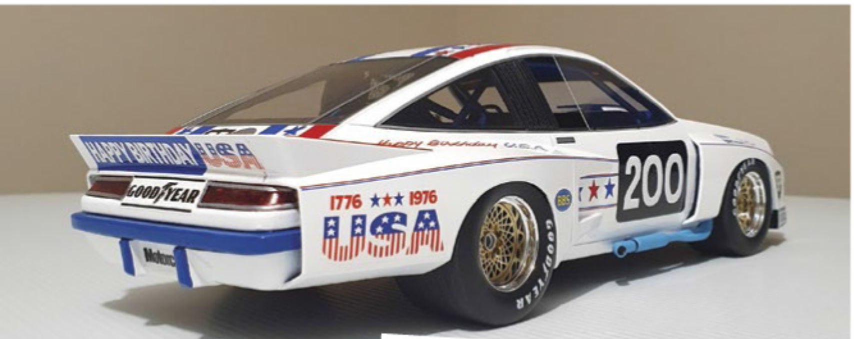


to perform quite a bit of surgery to bring them up to a standard that Allan would find acceptable.

"The commercially available 'Federation' version needed considerable alterations to match the real thing, including redoing many logos due to wrong size and/or font, re-doing the window/windscreen trim to a more realistic width, adding the bonnet number, extending the rear spoiler and adding driver's window net and also the passenger side window.

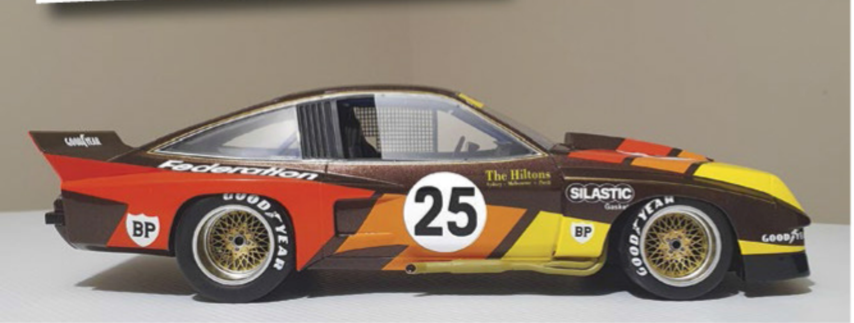
"Another critical aesthetic was to widen the front and rear track by cutting away the very thick resin inner guards. This now gives the Monza its meaner and more accurate stance.

"The two white versions I've created from Federation donors and represent DeKon chassis 1005 in its original 1976 ASSC winning spec, including the famous #200 'Happy Birthday USA' livery as raced by Allan at the Sandown round on July 4th, commemorating the US bicentennial.

"Interestingly both 1976 versions of this controversial General Motors weapon carry logos of Ford's parts subsidiary, Motorcraft! This was a clear (and intentional) demonstration by Allan to prove a point to Ford's top brass that he's prepared to diversify his racing allegiances... unless they come to the party! Needless to say, the ploy worked, as by September of '76 the Moffat Ford Dealer Team was born... bankrolled by Ford's parts division, Motorcraft!

"So I hope you can find space in an upcoming issue to show these off."

Done, Geoff! Seriously, this guy's work is next-level.



MOFFAT
Federation
25
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- Includes numbered Certificate of Authenticity.

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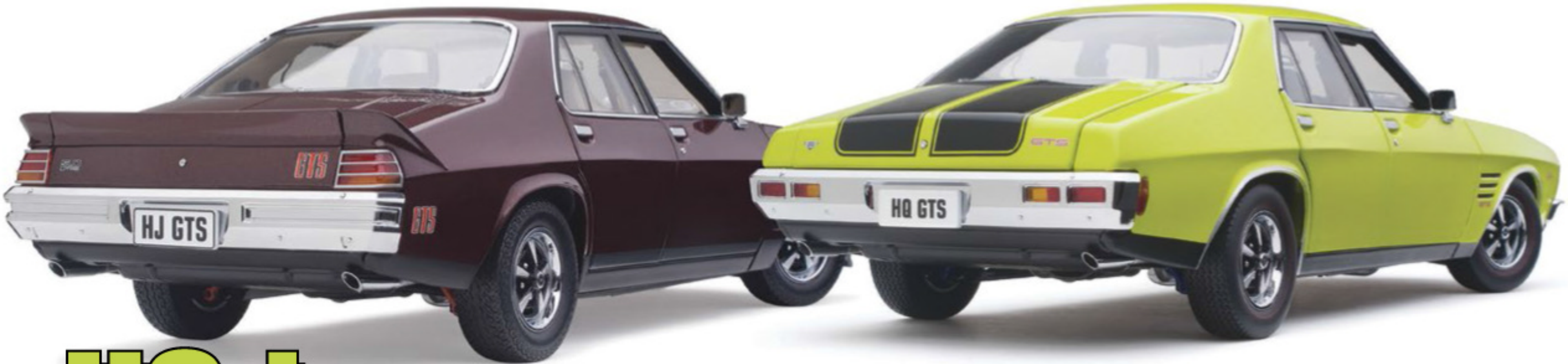
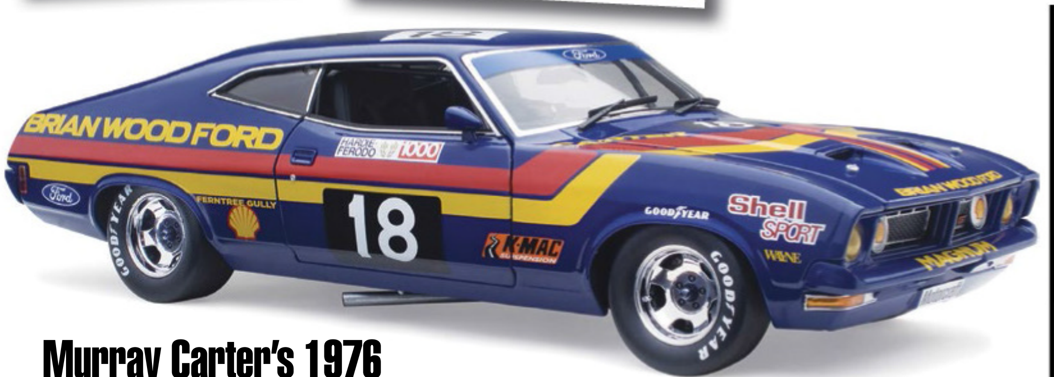


HQ heaven

Holden HQ Monaro GTS sedan

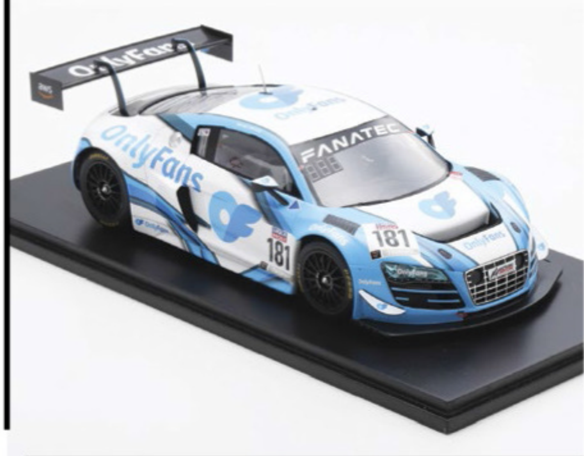
A pair of very nice 1:18 scale Monaros, from Classic Carlectables. I have to say, if I was to have just one of these, I'd be in a bit of a pickle – which one to choose? The Barbados Green would certainly be more eye-catching in the cabinet, I guess, but the Metallic Claret has almost a glow to it. Both models have all the usual fantastic detail and features, like the detailed engine and surrounding bay that looks just as good as the original. The bonnet also uses sprung metal hinges for strength and stay open function. They have soft rubber seats and fabric seat belts are also included for a realistic appearance. Their boots include spare wheel with retaining wing nut, jack and tyre lever. There will be 700 of the HQ and even fewer of the HJ and they include certificate with individual production number.



Murray Carter's 1976 Bathurst XB Falcon GT

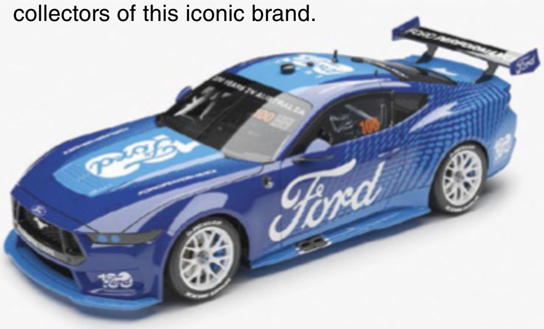
As we're celebrating the 100th birthday of Ford Australia, it's fitting that Classic Carlectables has put out a new Murray Carter model. The ever-popular Murray, of course, was an enduring presence for Ford in touring car racing right through the '70s. The Melbourne privateer mightn't have won much – but he very nearly spoiled Holden's party on the debut race for the Torana L34 in Adelaide in 1974 – but he was always there. This lovely 1:18 scale model of his 1976 Bathurst XB Falcon looks a treat – the big coupes always looked unreal as racers, with that massive rubber filling the rear guards. Murray was supported for such a long time by Brian Wood Ford, too – in the days when a suburban dealer could make a meaningful contribution to someone's racing budget. The boot interior shows only the racing essentials including the large capacity fuel tank with no wheel well and the extended roll bars. The seats are replicated using soft rubber, including the driver's racing seat. Chrome buckles and fabric seat belts are a nice feature. The metal spring bonnet hinges replicate the original hinges and allow the bonnet to be smoothly positioned. The model includes a certificate, while the production number is mounted to the chassis. With just 700 of this model to be available, I'd expect it to be snapped up. Check out Muz's machine and the Monaros at www.classiccarlectables.com.au

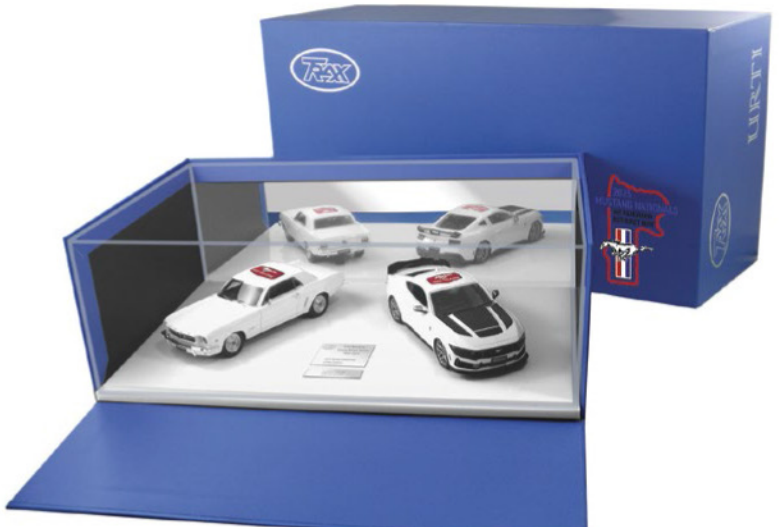
Renee Gracie Audi R8 LMS GT Ultra:



Ford 100 Gen3 Mustang

From Authentic Collectables comes this limited-edition Mustang Gen3 Supercar model in celebration of Ford's 100th year in Australia. This 1:18 die-cast model has opening bonnet and doors, a highly detailed interior and engine bay. Underneath, the undercarriage details the unique Gen3 Supercars floorpan. It's comprised of more than 200 individual metal and plastic parts, with anywhere between 100-200 steps in paint and decoration finishing. Officially endorsed by Ford, it's a must-have for collectors of this iconic brand.





Trax 1:64 Mustangs

This twin-set was available for the first time at the recent celebration of All Things Mustang at Mount Panorama. And it was so popular, Trax has made it available to the rest of us. I've only seen these pre-production samples, but don't they look great? The matched pair of Mustangs (the first, 1964 car and the current model) aren't quite bookends – there are more Mustangs to come, we hope. But they make a very nice little display item. No idea yet on price, but I'd imagine south of $100. Check them out at www.topgear.com.au

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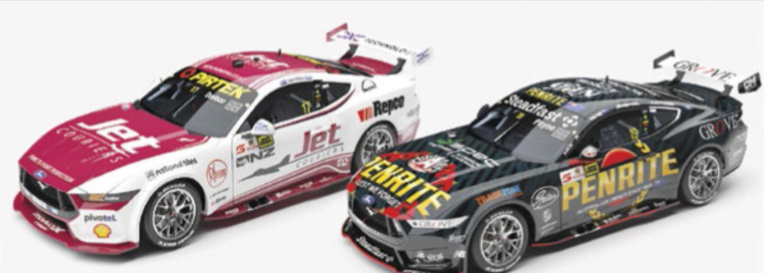
World Challenge 2023 class champion

In 2023 Renee Gracie made a return to motorsport after a six-year hiatus. Once a rising star in Australian racing, Renee stepped away from the sport in 2017. Her comeback was marked by her entry into the GT World Challenge Australia where she competed in the Trophy Series, driving an Audi R8 LMS Ultra under the banner of her own team with major sponsorship from OnlyFans.

Gracie's return was not just a personal milestone but also a significant moment for women in motorsport. She emphasised the importance of representation and the need for diverse role models in motorsport.

Celebrate Gracie's triumphant return to motorsport with this high-quality resin model crafted by Spark models. This unique low run model will come mounted on a black base with clear display case to protect your model. Only 200 units will be released and will include a signed certificate of authenticity.

See more about this model at www.motorfocus.com.au



Taupo tourers

The 100-years Mustang is just one of several new Gen3 Supercars Mustangs from Authentic Collectibles. First, there's Matt Payne's Jason Richards Trophy winner, in 1:43 and 1:18 scales. The bigger model will include a replica of the Jason Richards Trophy. Part of the proceeds of these models will go to the RSL's ANZAC Appeal, too. A nice gesture. There's also a pair of pairs – 1:18 and 1:43 of both the Dick Johnson Racing Mustangs from Taupo. The cars ran a unique livery at this event (Jet Couriers) so serious DJR collectors will need to grab at least one. And Brodie Kostecki fans will want to celebrate Bush's pole position, his first for his new team. To make sure you're on the list for these models, get over to www.authenticcollectibles.com.au

It's on Again!

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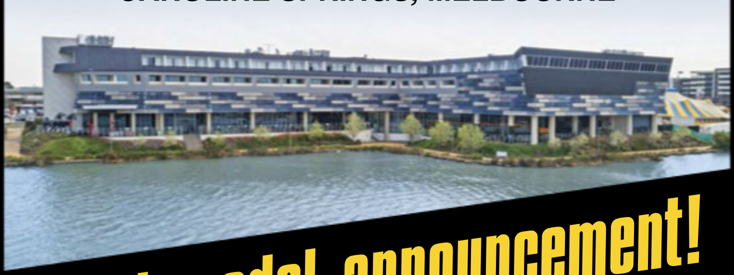
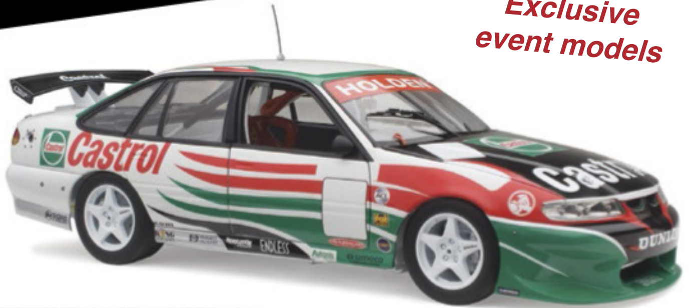


First model announcement!

Holden VS Commodore
1998 Castrol Cougars livery

Exclusive event models



This model features the 1998 livery run by Melinda Price and Kerryn Brewer at the 1998 Bathurst 1000. Finishing a credible 11th, this was the highest finishing position for an all female driving pair at the great race. This car was also driven by Larry Perkins in the 1998 Gold Coast supercars race.

This limited edition model will come with a decal set to complete the Price/Brewer Bathurst car or the Larry Perkins Gold Coast car.

CLASSIC CARLECTABLES
1:18 Scale diecast
Opening parts Qty: 400

ACE MODEL CARS
1:43 Scale resin
Qty: 300

Special Guest: Melinda Price

Melinda will be one of our special guests at the Gala dinner. Aaron Noonan will spend time with her talking about her racing career. Melinda will also be on hand to sign your model and grab a photo opportunity.

Tickets on sale NOW

diecastmodelexpo.com.au

2025 Van Nationals

In 1976, a group of people from across Australia came together at Mildura to celebrate a passion and a lifestyle: vanning. Camping in the backs of often highly-customised Sandmans, Drifters, Sundowners and Bedfords, late nights were spent catching up with mates, and the days cruising the region and polishing paint and chrome to show of these unique vehicles to fellow vanners and the public.

Fifty years later, over the Easter weekend, 2025, and over 250 people and nearly 200 vans made the journey back to Mildura where the first Australian Van Nationals was held. Entrants came from all States and Territories of Australia; the bloke who travelled the longest in a van was from Darwin – and he didn't even take the direct route! He did about 5000km from Darwin to Mildura – not a bad effort in an old HX Sandman.

The van scene today is a mixture of original vanners and new blood, and the range of vehicles is as diverse as it ever was: from the radical custom vans of the '70s and '80s to the perfectionist detail of restored panel vans, the more modern Holden vans, the elite 'trailer queens', and the daily drivers. The Australian Van Nationals is nothing without the people, the culture, and it is due to this incredible community coming together, helping and supporting one another, that the nats celebrated its 50th event.

Words: Jess Ackland
Images: Andrew Davis

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Fifty years after the first Australian Van Nationals were held, over 250 people and nearly 200 vans made the journey back to Mildura to celebrate

SANDMAN
SANDMAN
SANDMAN

If you've got a car club or event that you'd like featured in *AMC* magazine, contact our Club Directory Manager Mat Clancy – mclancy@chevron.com.au

AMC Club Directory

CAR CLUBS

A9X Torana Club Australia Inc.
Established to assist all its members identify and preserve genuine examples of the A9X Torana by providing assistance with information, parts, and services.
WEB: http://a9xclub.org.au

Brock Commodore Owners Assoc. of Australia Inc
The Brock Commodore Owners Association of Australia Inc (BCOAA Inc) endeavours to bring together owners of Brock/HDT Special Vehicles built Commodores (VC-VL) and WB Magnums (Statesman and utility variants), produced and issued with a build number during the period that Peter Brock owned and traded under the HDT Special Vehicles Pty Ltd company name from 1980 to 1988.
WEB: https://bcoaa.com

Canberra Torana Club (CTC)
The CTC was founded in 2003 with the goal of preserving the history and experience of the Holden Torana for future generations. The club is about bringing people together in the Canberra region who share a passion for these classic cars and providing social and meaningful events to allow members to enjoy their rides. **WEB:** https://www.canberratoranaclub.com/wordpress/

Charger Club of Victoria Inc.
Dedicated to the Australian designed and made Chrysler Valiant Charger which was sold from 1971 through to 1978. All Chrysler products are welcome.
WEB: www.chargerclub.org.au

Charger Club Of WA Inc
Open to all enthusiasts that have an interest in any Chrysler products. The club currently has around 200 members and conducts monthly club events and meetings.
WEB: www.chargerclubofwa.asn.au/

Chrysler Car Club of South Australia
A club for all people who have a genuine interest in Chrysler vehicles – of all types, standard and modified, from all countries that produced them. We have over three hundred and fifty (350) members and new members are always welcome. **WEB:** https://cccsa.net.au/

Classic Holden Car Club NT Inc.
The Classic Holden Car Club of the Northern Territory Inc. is a group of like-minded people of all ages with a common interest in old Holden's, generally over 30 years of age. **WEB:** http://www.classicholdencarclubnt.com

Cudgegong Cruisers Car Club of NSW
Cudgegong Cruisers Inc. caters for all brands and styles including Chev, Chrysler, Ford, Holden and Japanese plus Street Cars, Drag Cars, Historic Cars, Bikes & Rods are all welcome. **WEB:** http://www.cudgegongcruisers.com.au/

Falcon GT Club of South Australia
Emphasis placed on social outings along with the appreciation and preservation of this famous Ford marque. The Falcon GT Club of SA aims to offer members regular social activities such as Club Displays, Cruise Nights and observation rallies, Inter Club gatherings with other Classic Muscle Car clubs. **WEB:** http://www.gtclubsa.com.au/

Ford Coupe Club of Australia
Club for coupe enthusiasts and owners to talk about their cars and share information and ideas that relate to their common interest including XA to XC coupes, Superbirds, John Goss Specials, Falcon Cobras and the prestigious Landau. **WEB:** https://www.fordcoupe.club

FPV & XR Owners Club of Victoria
A relaxed family-friendly club for passionate owners of FPV, XR and Tickford vehicles. Amongst our club members we have interests as diverse as Track Days, Sprints, Social Drives, Car Shows, and monthly meetings so there is plenty of things to be part of.
WEB: https://www.fpvxrclub.com

GT Falcon Club of New Zealand Inc.
Encouraging the collection and dissemination of technical and historical information on the GT is a large part of the club's role. The club also provides an outlet for owners of GTs and their families, to enjoy social activities in the company of like-minded enthusiasts.
WEB: http://www.gtfalcon.co.nz/

HDT Owners Club Qld Inc.
For all HDT Special Vehicles produced from 1980 through to 2018 and beyond that meet our membership requirements. Peter Champion from HDT Special Vehicles is the Club Patron. **WEB:** http://www.hdtownersclubqld.com.au/

Mildura Muscle Car Club
Mildura Muscle Car Club was formed in 2007 and has since acquired a strong membership base. As a not for profit community group we focus on social events and car related activities, with a dedication to preserve and enjoy older cars. We welcome cars of interest, modified or traditional with a particular passion for cars from the "super car" era of the 60's and 70's. Minimum age for club permit plates is 25 years in Victoria and 30 years in NSW.
WEB: www.milduramusclecarclub.yolasite.com

Mini Car Club of NSW
Since its humble beginnings the Mini Car Club of NSW has grown to be one of the strongest and most diverse motoring clubs in NSW and now boasts a membership of over 600. The club would like to extend a warm welcome to anyone who would like to join in and help keep the Mini spirit alive. **WEB:** https://miniclub.com.au/

Monaro Car Club of SA Inc
Established in 1978 and now has a current membership base of over 200. Members vary in age from young people with their first Monaro to more senior members that have owned Monaros for more than 30 years. Then there are members with nothing but just a love of the great car and more recently, members with the new Vx CV6s and CV8s. Recognised as one of the more professional clubs in Adelaide, we provide an interesting and entertaining agenda for members. **WEB:** http://www.monaroclubsa.asn.au/

Monaro Car Club of WA Inc.
The club is represented by all models of Monaro, from the early HK's, through to the latest CV8Z. The standards of cars range from pristine examples of 327/350ci GTS's, to highly modified race cars, and everything in between. There is no requirement to own a Monaro, all we ask is that you are a keen enthusiast.
WEB: http://www.monaroclubwa.asn.au

Monaro Club of Queensland Inc
The Monaro Club of Queensland brings together people with a common interest, mainly the preservation of the Holden Monaro. The Club welcomes all model Monaro's, from the original HK Monaro of 1968 through to the last CV8Z Monaro of 2005, factory original, meticulously restored or highly modified. The Club also extends membership to other Holden and General Motors manufactured models. **WEB:** http://www.monaroclubqld.asn.au

Monaro Club of Victoria
The Monaro Club of Victoria is a place to meet with like-minded Monaro enthusiasts, sharing know-how on Monaro models and options, restoration and mechanical improvements tips, club cruises and track days.
WEB: https://monaroclubvic.com.au

Mustang Owners Club Australia Inc.
The Mustang Club caters for all Mustangs, 1964 to present models, stock or modified. If you would like to be part of the Mustang scene and enjoy the company of other enthusiasts, join in the social events and get in touch with solving your Mustang queries. The website provides links to the affiliate clubs in all states and territories.
WEB: https://www.mustang.org.au

NSW Torana Club Inc
The NSW Torana Club Inc is a friendly, family-oriented club and one where club runs, in a relaxed social environment, are the focus of our existence. The club takes pride in its runs which encompass a variety of destinations, including two overnight away weekends per year, with the emphasis being on having a fun day out in your Torana with friends and family. **WEB:** www.nswtoranaclub.com.au

Oldskool Muscle Car Cruises
Sydney based car club formed in 2021 by like minded family orientated car enthusiasts. Breakfast Show & Shine events held every 2nd Sunday of the month at Bungarribee Park, Doonside NSW. **WEB:** www.facebook.com/groups/592044424704681

Surfcoast Corvette Club Inc.
Surfcoast Corvettes is a Corvette Car Club in the Geelong region of Victoria. There is a wealth of expertise within the Surfcoast Corvette club's group of members. Plentiful advice is available on restoring, repairing, modifying, servicing and maintaining your Corvette. Members can suggest the right technician for specialised work as well as the best places to buy parts, and cars, both in Australia and from the US. Surfcoast Corvettes has strong links with other Corvette clubs throughout Victoria and Australia and shares combined events with these other Corvette clubs.
WEB: https://surfcoastcorvettes.com

The GT Club Inc
Club for GT Falcons built between 1967 & 1976 and modern and limited edition GT's, with a social outlook, providing an avenue for like minded people who share a passion and interest to congregate and interact.
WEB: http://www.thegtclubinc.com

XR-XY ZA-ZD Falcon-Fairlane Club of Vic. Inc.
Providing a social venue for lovers of the Australian Falcon, Futura, Fairmont and Fairlane family of cars for over 20 years! **WEB:** http://www.falconfairlaneclub.org.au

MUSEUMS

Brisbane Motor Museum,
959 Nudgee Road, Banyo, Qld.
Features rotating exhibits on all things motoring including celebrated marques, motoring clubs' milestones, themed exhibits, library, gear and more.
WEB: https://www.brisbanemotormuseum.com.au

National Motor Racing Museum, Bathurst NSW
Celebrates the rich history of Australian Motor Sport, with a particular focus on Bathurst and Mount Panorama as the spiritual home of Australian motor racing.
WEB: https://museumsbathurst.com.au/national-motor-racing-museum/

The National Motor Museum, Birdwood SA
Discover how motor vehicles have opened up our country, linking some of the most isolated communities in the world. From the stately to the absurd, from the hand-built to the mass-produced, see the vehicles people loved and loathed, thrashed and pampered, in the pursuit of their motoring dreams! **WEB:** https://motor.history.sa.gov.au

National Automobile Museum of Tasmania
The National Automobile Museum of Tasmania presents a constantly changing world class public display of motor vehicles and motorcycles showcasing Australia's motoring heritage and now features "The Hall of Muscle", a celebration of the Australian Muscle Car. Call (03) 6334 8888
Em: admin@namt.com.au **WEB:** https://namt.com.au

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www.musclecarmag.com.au/resources

WHAT'S ON IN 2025

JUNE

V8 Muscle – Legends Live On

7 June-14 September 2025 – Brisbane Motor Museum, Banyo QLD

Experience the raw power and timeless allure of the V8 Engine. This electrifying exhibit will showcase legendary machines that define performance, style, and automotive history. Don't miss this celebration of V8 Legends!
Visit: https://www.brisbanemotormuseum.com.au

2025 Supercars Triple Crown

20-22 June 2025 – Hidden Valley, NT

Supercars is back at the Top End for the 2025 betr Darwin Triple Crown featuring Round 3 of the Touring Car Masters. Visit https://www.supercars.com/events/2025-darwin-triple-crown

JULY

All Ford Day Queensland

20 July 2025 – Willowbank Raceway, Qld

Show and shine, trade stands, swap meet, race ya mate, food stalls and free kids rides. Preferred online bookings through the Willowbank Raceway website ($2.00 online booking fee nonrefundable). Tickets willl be dearer at the gate on the day. Kids under 13 free. Visit their Facebook page for more info – https://www.facebook.com/groups/1117942566298515

2025 NSW All Ford Day Weekend

26-27 July 2025 – Sydney Dragway, Eastern Creek NSW

A huge weekend to view all of Fords finest. From trucks to drag cars and everything in between, come along and see over 1200 Ford vehicles on display and join in the activities to celebrate 100 years of Ford in Australia. Saturday's swap meet begins from 7am with drag racing from 10am (Ford powered vehicles only). Sunday is the huge car show and concours display. Visit https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61557932384976

AUGUST

37th All Holden Display Day and Swap Meet

3-4 August 2025 – Hawkesbury Showground, Clarendon NSW

Home to Australia's largest display of Holden badged vehicles and supported by dozens of NSW Holden Clubs which cater for all Holden enthusiasts and every Holden ever produced. There is also a 2-day swap meet held on both Saturday and Sunday from 6am. Spectator Admission: $10 Adults. Kids Under 15 Years Free. For more info visit https://www.allholdenday.com.au

Dubbo Motorfest

30 August, 2025 – Dubbo Showground, Dubbo NSW

From a relaxed Show & Shine on the field to the breathtaking Elite Pavilions showcasing some of Australia's biggest and best builds, there's something for everyone, along with numerous prizes to be won. Fun for the whole family, not just car and motorcycle fans. Food vendors, live music and the thrilling FMX Motocross. Visit https://www.dubbomotorfest.com.au

OCTOBER

2025 Cortina Nationals

3-5 October 2025 – Mount Panorama, Bathurst NSW

The Nationals is celebrating 60 years since Bathurst glory (1963-64-65) and is about getting all Cortina enthusiasts together for a weekend of driving, discussing and of course showing. Hosted by the British Ford Club of NSW inc. and open to all Ford Cortina models. Visit www.britishfordclub.com.au

Capital All Ford Day

26 October 2025 – Queanbeyan Showground ACT

Presented by the Ford Performance Club of ACT showcasing Fords of all vintages, and models from clubs both locally and interstate. Show and shine (any and all Fords small, big, new, old all welcome), trophies, trade stalls, prizes, kids entertainment and refreshments. Entrants Gate opens 7am at the Glebe Avenue entrance. Spectators from 9am (Gold Coin donation). For more info visit https://www.fordperformanceact.com/events/capital-all-ford-day

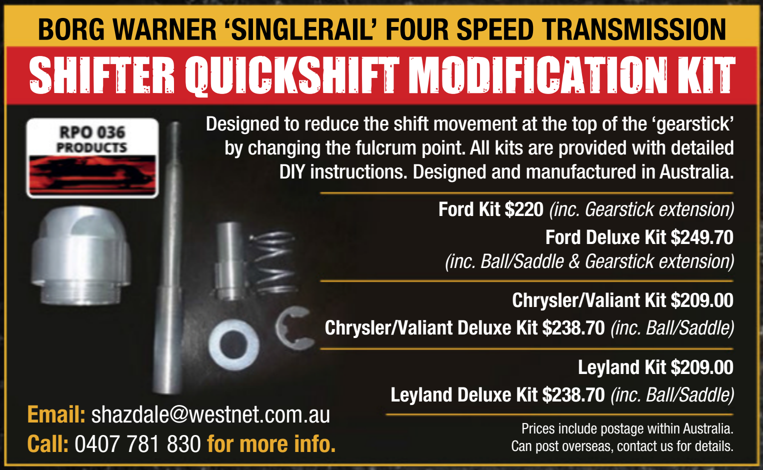
Variety Aussie Muscle Car Run

26-31 October 2025 – Tasmania

Get ready for the ultimate road trip where you'll cruise through Tasmania's breathtaking landscapes behind the wheel of your Aussie Muscle Car, from the winding mountain roads to the picturesque coastal routes. All of the money you raise goes directly towards helping Aussie kids who are sick, disadvantaged or living with disability to help unleash their full potential. For more info visit https://varietyamcr.com.au/2025event

FOR MORE EVENT LISTINGS VISIT....
https://www.musclecarmag.com.au/resources/whats-on

Specialists Black Book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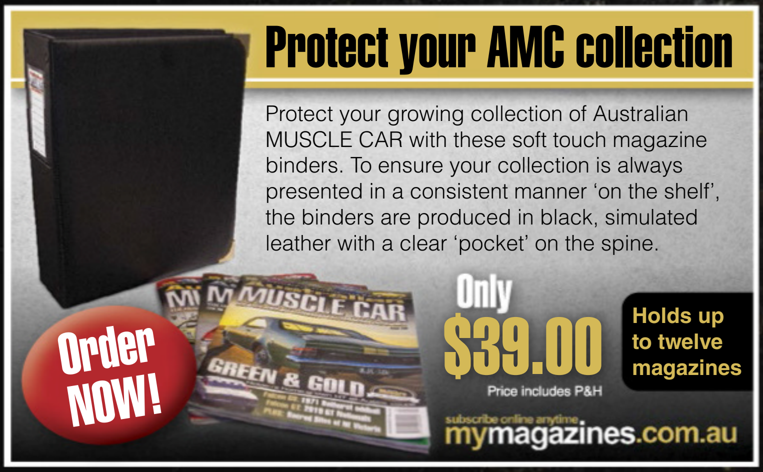
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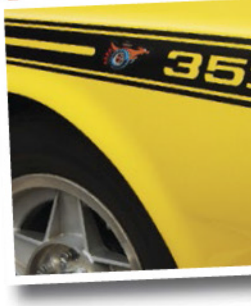

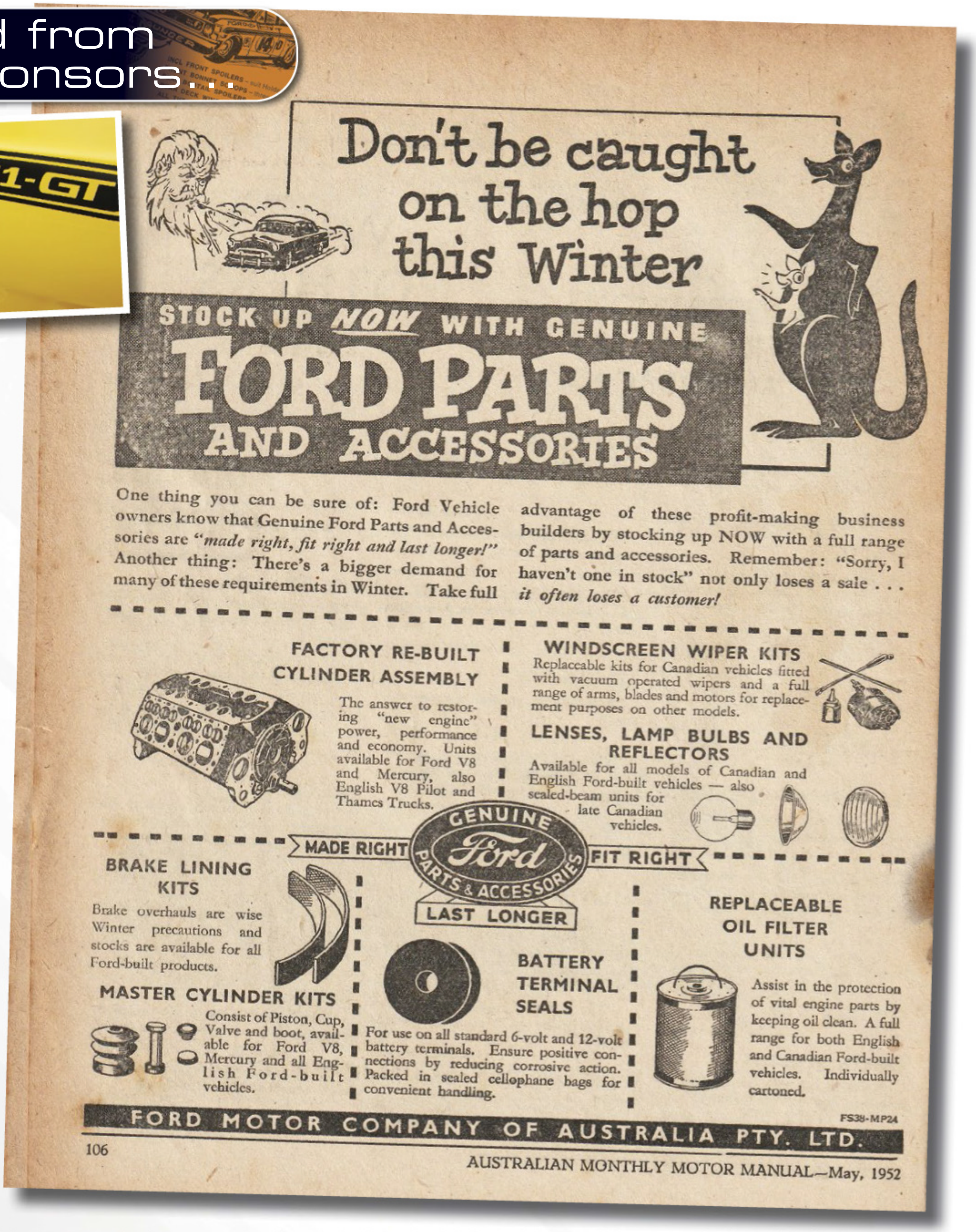

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AUSTRALIAN MONTHLY MOTOR MANUAL—May, 1952

A cartoon-style kangaroo on wheels with exhaust pipes at face value might not sound particularly evocative or exciting… and yet that's exactly what it was. Ford Australia's iconic Superoo badge logo was an example of sheer automotive marketing genius. More than half a century on, it doesn't look dated at all, it still looks cool. Incorporating one of the two native animals depicted on the Australian Coat of Arms was a smart move – it made for a visual image that immediately informed that the Ford wearing this badge isn't just a high-performance Ford, it's a high-performance *Aussie* Ford. But the Superoo badge was not the first time Ford Australia used 'roos in their marketing. Way back in the '50s Ford ran a print ad campaign for its parts and accessories division featuring a cartoon kangaroo with joey in pouch. The ad shown here is from 1952, by which time rival GM-H was beginning to dominate Ford with its new and hugely popular 'Australia's Own' car, the Holden. As our Ford 100 years feature elsewhere in these pages explains, the reality was that GM-H wasn't any less an American concern than Ford Australia, even if millions of Australians saw getting themselves behind the wheel of a new Holden as almost an act of patriotic duty. Could it be that Ford's ad agency in the early '50s had adopted the 'roo in an effort to counter the myth of the 'Aussie' Holden?

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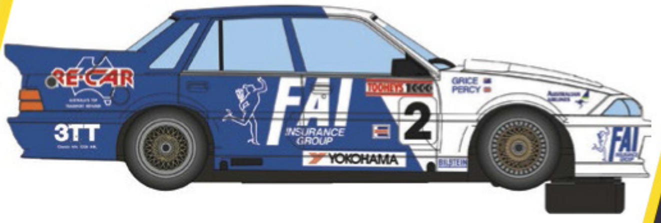
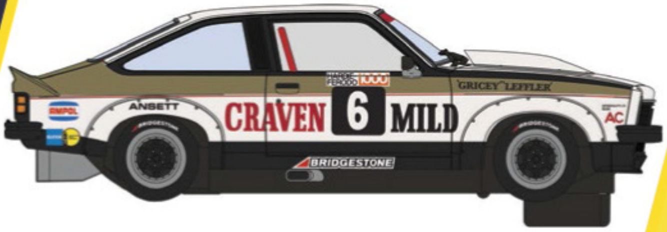
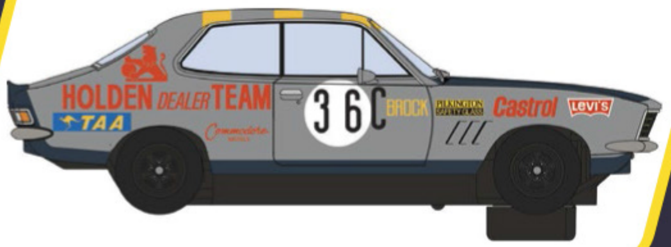


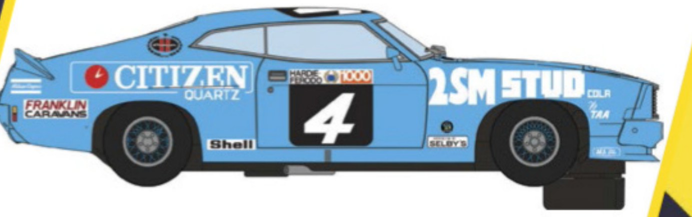
C4585F Holden VL Commodore
1988 Bathurst



C4604F Holden A9X Torana
1978 Bathurst



C4608F Holden LJ XU-1 Torana
1972 South Pacific Touring Series



C4618F Ford XC Falcon
1977 Bathurst

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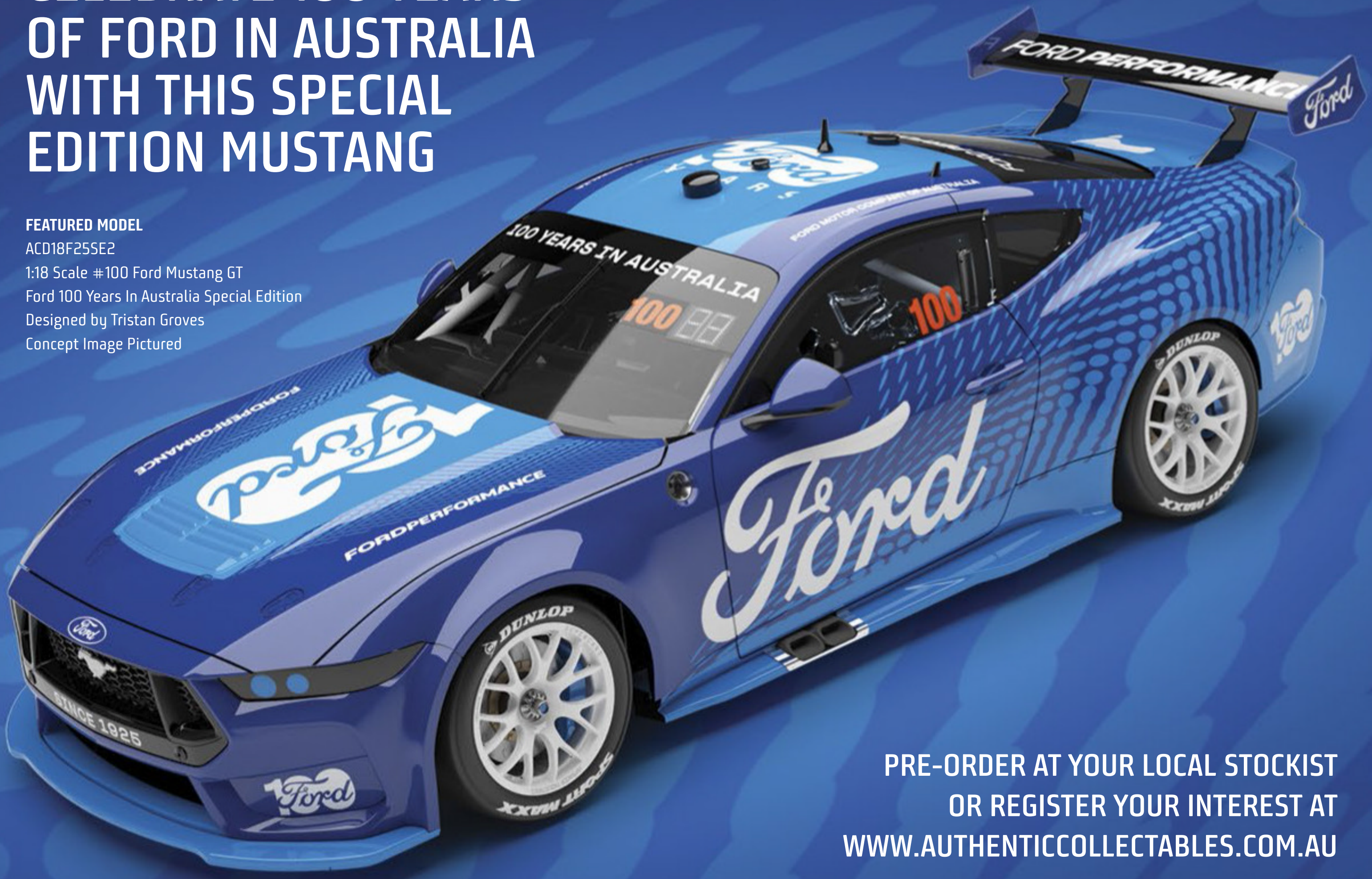
Concept Image Pictured



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100 years ago (on March 31, 1925), Ford Australia began building an unbreakable connection with Australia – from humble beginnings, to the legendary Falcon and Territory, to the powerhouse it is today, designing and engineering the Ranger – Australia’s #1 selling vehicle – and the Everest, for the world. As a proud Ford licensee, we are pleased to offer fans the chance to take part in this special year, with this unique collectors edition model.

Motorsport has played a significant role in Ford’s century-long connection with Australia, and Authentic Collectables is honoured to have been entrusted with designing this exclusive, limited-edition Ford Mustang GT Gen3 Supercar model – the Blue Oval’s weapon of choice for racing in this centenary year.

Featuring an incredible livery designed by Tristan Groves, the model showcases a striking blue Ford design, drawing inspiration from recent Ford-branded Mustang Supercars of the modern era. Prominent Ford 100 Years and Ford Performance branding adorn the livery, while the bold orange ‘100’ on the windows pays tribute to this iconic brand continuing to lead the pack Down Under.

This 1:18 scale model is scheduled to be produced in high detail die-cast with opening parts which includes the bonnet and both the driver and passenger doors. It will come in an exclusive, one-off limited edition with an individually numbered Certificate of Authenticity presented in its own, Authentic Collectables branded protective cardboard folder.

Officially endorsed by Ford, it’s a must have for collectors of this iconic brand. Place a pre-order at your local stockist or register your interest for it on our website.

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